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Lectures on paedobaptism

Sam^l. Miller.



Saml. Miller
LECTURES

ON

P Æ D O B A P T I S M.

BY

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"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."—Luke xviii. 16.

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Miss. Am. B.

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P R E F A C E .

IN presenting the following pages to my Christian brethren, it may not be amiss to state, very briefly, the circumstances which have produced them. These circumstances are the following. In discharging the pastoral duties which devolved upon me, in connection with that congregation, over which I have the pleasure still to preside, it became necessary for me both to administer and enforce the ordinance of Infant Baptism. As an evangelist, or rather, I may say, as a teacher, I had but little to do with this religious rite. But on becoming a pastor, it became a prominent part of my ministerial work. No sooner had I turned my attention to the subject, than I perceived the gross abuses connected with this institution, among the people who had so affectionately made me their spiritual instructor. These abuses lay with great weight upon my conscience. They haunted me perpetually. I could not think of proceeding to rear a divine superstructure, while one of

the very pillars of that building was radically defective. This led to inquiry, to prayer—and, as I still inquired and prayed, greater and more numerous evils still appeared. I saw other churches in the same condition with my own. I heard other ministers complain, and found, to my astonishment, that the evils, at least in our southern Zion, were not only general, but nearly universal. I inquired into the *causes* of these abuses. This naturally led me to search for a remedy. *More light* I perceived was evidently the *only means* of cure. I attempted at first to instruct but my own flock; and this in the most private way. But, as the evils were common, and the very privacy of my instruction the means of its defeat, I resolved on something more extended and more public. This conviction produced the determination to diffuse light on this subject in *some way*. I saw the need of some publication *adapted* to the exigences of the case. And although I had read several treatises on the subject, and many of them very excellent; yet, I could but conclude, that there was some *circumstantial* defect in them all, which would prevent their certain and immediate utility, to the extent required. Not satisfied with my

own opinion in this particular, I conversed with a very judicious and pious Christian minister, on the subject. His sentiments coincided precisely with my own. We both agreed that something was needed to render the ordinance of infant baptism better understood among our churches. In communicating, too, some of the views which I had taken of the subject, to an attorney, who is also an elder in our church, and a man of general esteem both for piety and talents, he persuaded me unhesitatingly to give those views to the public. Still, my youth presented to the acceptance of his advice a barrier, which seemed, at first, insurmountable. On reflection, however, I supposed, that if the *fathers* had *omitted*, in any degree, the discharge of a duty, it would be but the spontaneous promptings of filial piety, for the *sons* to attempt its performance. Nor could I bring myself to suppose, that a humble though honest effort to benefit the dear church of which I am a member, and a minister, would return with vituperations and censures upon my head. These views induced me to write ; and they now lead me to publish, with much trembling, to be sure, the following Lectures on infant baptism.

Another obstruction to the present work, which had no small weight upon my mind, was, the controversy in which this subject is apt to be involved. Taught by the word of God to love a Christian, any where and every where; accustomed to pour, without restraint, the warmest feelings of my heart upon brethren, who differ from me in sentiment on the peculiarities of our respective creeds; and being peculiarly intimate with many of the members and ministers of that denomination, with whose opinions I must necessarily come into collision, in the present treatises; I could but hesitate to make public, sentiments, which, though as dear to me as my life, might yet seem to injure and abuse a large and respectable number of the followers of Christ. But the love of *truth*, of the church, and of the Redeemer, has overcome this obstacle. Still, however, if these Lectures *wound*, let it be remembered, that they were not written to *wound*, but to *heal*. No personal controversy has produced them. They are the offspring of cool deliberation, and genuine love; and they are *immediately designed to remedy the abuses now existing in the Presbyterian church on the subject of which they treat.*

To my ministerial brethren I would simply say, could not some *definite term* be fixed upon, within which the members of our churches should be obliged to baptize their children. The time for the administration of circumcision among the Jews being fixed, that rite never could be denied from that very fact. Whereas, the precise period for the baptism of a child being, from a very early period in the church, indefinite, its postponement, and even its *denial*, must almost necessarily have been the result. Probably this was the cause of the evil at first: *will not a remedy, judiciously applied at this point, be its most efficient cure?* I do not suggest the appointment of a *day*, but of a *period*, more or less extended. In this case, the subject would be defined, the obligation would assume visibility, and slumbering consciences would be awakened by the barrier presented to their criminal procrastinations. But I leave this hint with the wise and the good of our church.

I shall simply add, that as the work has cost me much of labor, of anxiety, and of prayer; and as in it I have sincerely aimed at the good of the church, I hope that it will be kindly received by the dear Christian brethren into whose hands it may fall; and

I also hope that it will be *carefully read, and re-read, by those for whose special benefit it is designed*. Though a little more voluminous than could be desired, yet let it be remembered, that nothing great or good can be acquired without patient toil and diligent research. Let parents, especially, remember, that it embraces a subject intimately connected with the salvation of their dear offspring. And that God may bless and sanctify this feeble tribute of a creature's affection for His great name, to the good of his church, and the promotion of the happiness of his children, is the sincere and ardent prayer of the author.

WASHINGTON, GEO., *April 8, 1834.*

ERRATA.

- On page 13, fourth line, for "question" read *institution*.
p. 16, twenty-fourth line, after "who" insert *have*.
p. 20, twenty-seventh line, for "course" read *cause*.
p. 31, twentieth line, for "absolute" read *obsolete*.
p. 65, seventh line, after "of" insert *but*.
p. 67, first line, for "the" read *their*.
p. 68, seventeenth line, for "the" read *their*.
p. 69, thirteenth line, read *said God to Abraham*.
p. 134, thirtieth line, for "as" read *a*.
p. 138, fourteenth line, for "secretly" read *securely*.

LECTURE I.

PRESENT STATE OF THE SUBJECT.

IN contemplating the subject of Pædobaptism, its present state deserves particular attention. Without a correct knowledge of this, it is impossible either to know or remedy those abuses into which this question has fallen.

1. My first remark here is, that this ordinance is regarded by an unbelieving world generally, but as the mere badge of denominational distinction. It should be deeply regretted by all, that the men of this world so little regard the kingdom of Christ, either in its doctrines or duties, its institutions or its hopes. But however lamentable, yet is it true, that many in most of the secular professions of life, are very much disposed to regard the whole subject of religion, as filling a sphere appropriate to itself, and distant from that in which they are called to move. Thus regarding men, but as the mere subjects of civil administration, they have, for the most part, overlooked the religious obligations, both of themselves and of others. That men of this description should fail to attach importance to a Christian ordinance, is altogether to be expected; and, that they should, falling in with their own prejudices or those of

others, jest at times with what they regard but as the mean scrupulosities of professing Christians, is but natural and common.

Besides, the particular institution which, it is my design, in the present treatises, to vindicate, must, from its very nature, be peculiarly obnoxious to the neglect and opposition of such men. It is based upon the *religious connection* between the parent and the child, and between them both and God. Of course, as worldly men are not in the habit of looking upon these *religious connections* themselves, so they cannot judge favorably of those institutions and duties which arise immediately out of such connections; or, in other words, as men in a state of unbelief, neglect their own souls, it cannot be expected that they will care very deeply for the salvation of their children. And many, too, of this very class of persons, even when converted, bring along with them to the very altar of God, the most inveterate prejudices against that institution which as immediately rests upon the *religious connection between them and their children*, as their own professions rest upon the *religious connections between themselves and God*. Though this may be regarded more as the result of habit, as a relic of previous unbelief, than as the effect of impiety, yet is it not only to be lamented, but sedulously guarded against by those who are the regular guardians of the truth and purity of the church.

2. A second remark I offer is, that Pædobaptism is, at present, virulently opposed by a large and respectable sect of Protestant Christians. It is unpleasant for me, in the defence of truth, to pass from principles to men; but I feel that justice to my subject requires it. From the determi-

nation with which this controversy has been carried on by the sect just alluded to, one cannot but come to the conclusion, that they regard Pædobaptism either as an offensive heresy, or as the relic of superstition. And as I, for one, am unwilling to impute their virulence either to deficiency in evangelical piety, or a want of charity, I take the more favorable construction mentioned above. Still, however, I must ask, is it consistent either with piety or charity, to regard as a dangerous heresy or a relic of superstition, an institution, which by far the majority of professing evangelical Christians view not only as plainly revealed in the word of God, but as one of the fundamental principles of a Christian society? Surely, if the peculiar tenets of this denomination urge them on to such conclusions, yet, both modesty and piety should restrain from embracing them, or certainly from embracing them to the exclusion of Christian brethren from the table of the Lord. For, taking it for granted, that Anabaptists and Pædobaptists are equally pious, equally capable of searching for and ascertaining the truth, and equally desirous of knowing it; then, certainly, the one have as much right to exclude from the communion as the other. In fact, a candid mind must admit that, since substance is more than shadow, Pædobaptists have the better right of the two. They believe that the baptism of a parent does, *in every case*, according to the Scriptures, imply the baptism of his child; and, that whenever parents exclude their offspring from this ordinance, they do, *in a very high sense*, violate the covenant of God. According, therefore, to this faith, Baptists themselves are not properly introduced into the church,—or, in other words, have made but a *partial* profession of

religion. While, therefore, according to the view of our Baptist brethren, *we* violate the institution *in the mode*; according to ours, *they* violate it *in the subjects*. Now, certainly, since the subjects of baptism are more important than the mode of its administration, there is greater reason that Pædobaptists should exclude their Baptist brethren from the table of the Lord, than that our Baptist friends should exclude us.

However beneficial this secession of a large denomination of Christians from the faith of the Fathers, may have been, to exhibit the spirituality of this institution; yet, it must be a matter of sincere regret, to all who contemplate aright its nature and design. It is always right to combat and remove, if possible, the abuses of a Christian institution; but to destroy the institution itself, when it stands upon the revealed will of God to man, can never subserve the cause of piety and truth. The present state of things in this respect, is like that of Israel, when Benjamin stood up against the eleven tribes. We are not only weakened ourselves, but the truth of the Gospel has fallen into contempt in the eyes of strangers.

3. A third remark I make on this part of the subject is, that Pædobaptism has not always been judiciously explained by those who attempted its vindication. It does not become me, I know, to rail against those whom it is my pride to venerate as wiser and better than myself. Still, if I might venture the assertion, I would say, that there has been, and now is, error in the method of explaining and enforcing this ordinance. This error is three-fold. Enough importance has not been attached to the institution itself. The reader or hearer evidently perceives that his

instructor approaches the subject with reluctance; and, probably too, he is assured, that it is not of great value, and that in order to maintain peace, he had better not meddle with it often. Out of this error, there grows another, which lies in not making this subject so prominent a theme of investigation as many others far less important to Christian practice. How meagre and vague do the most metaphysical dissertations on some of the more retired and abstruse points of theology look, when compared with the results of those labored researches by which common practical truth stands out with a prominence to be seen and understood by all! The man who busies himself amidst the mysticisms of abstract philosophy, may gain reputation for mind; and this too often from those who do not even understand him. But he who, applying the same energies and wielding the same robust intellect, unfolds practical principles, as he deserves as much praise for mind, so he deserves infinitely more for the services rendered his fellow men. The one resembles a man expending a vast fortune in constructing air-balloons; the other resembles him, who applies a fortune equally great, in constructing comfortable dwelling-houses for the poor. Now it surely arises neither from the fact, that this subject does not need investigation, nor from the fact that there are not those adequate to such a task, that it has not been placed before the world in a more plain and tangible form. The unimportance with which even its advocates teach it, seems to be the only adequate cause. But, is it thus unimportant? Most certainly not: whether we regard either the frequency with which the Pædobaptist is assailed by those who differ from him; the constancy with which he must comply with

its precept, or the real influence of the institution itself upon society and upon the souls of men. This is an ordinance which lies at the very threshold of the Christian temple. It lies at the very commencement of the divine life. It is important, and ought to be well understood. The other mistake is, that, as it is held up before an audience, it is not always fairly exhibited,—a weak argument is sometimes relied on when a stronger was just at hand : and its spiritual signification and importance are not sufficiently insisted upon and explained. Often it happens, that the very weakness of the defence has injured the cause, and sent its adversaries away in triumph. And this, too, not unfrequently arises from the fact, that the spiritual teacher himself has not investigated the subject as thoroughly as he should have done !

4. Another fact observable in the present state of this institution is, that compliance with it is not regarded, in many cases, as essential or even important to membership. There are, within the writer's own knowledge, members of church sessions, who have not baptized their children ; there are a still larger number of lay members, who have never complied with this ordinance : and so far as his knowledge extends, the sentiment is even common, that parental membership does *not* involve the baptism of their children. Now, how it is possible for those who stand in the very door of the kingdom of Christ, and who hold the keys of that kingdom, to admit members on a principle so loose and so contrary to that exhibited in the Scriptures, is difficult to be accounted for, but from the awful dereliction of duty on this subject so lamentably prevalent. The baptism of children is really, to an alarming extent, regarded

as a mere loose appendage to our church. Thus, besides the confusion introduced in this way among us, the ordinance itself is vitally suffering, and among those, too, who should be its friends.

5. Another feature in the existing state of things is, that even those who comply with this institution externally, seem to have by no means adequate views of its scriptural obligation and importance. They comply more from education, or habit, or consistency, or from some undefined expectation of advantage to be derived from it, than from any clear and scriptural view of its nature and design. Now, that such persons cannot possibly, with intelligence and accuracy, defend the institution when assailed in their presence, instruct their children in its meaning and obligations, and discharge the various duties growing out of it, is evident. In the hands of such persons the ordinance must invariably suffer; and its abuses will thus become additional argument in the hands of opposers. That such is really the condition of things, to a lamentable extent, is obvious to any who have paid the subject the least attention. Parents really seem not to know what is implied in that solemn act by which they consecrate their offspring to God.

6. As the result of the above evils, it is not to be wondered at, that children, very frequently, renounce their early baptism. As they have never been instructed in its nature, and have derived no perceptible advantage from its administration, it is impossible that they should pay it that regard which the ordinance demands. And, though the more yielding and docile may confirm by their own personal act, that work of piety which was executed for

them when young, yet, they do so probably more from respect to their parents, than from a conviction of duty. The most will be disposed to shake off the fetters by which they have thus been bound, and the necessity of which they so little perceive. Amidst the temptations to crime, and the fascinations to vanity, which surround them, they feel themselves bound by nothing but the licentiousness of their nature. The recollection of Christian obligation never once enters the mind. And they would even mock at him who should dare to tell them that the vows of early consecration were upon them. Were not the obligations of Pædobaptism regarded during a state of impenitence as a mere nullity ; but yet, as capable of revival upon repentance, probably many more than now reject their baptismal vows, would be found to lay them aside : for, one of the most disagreeable situations in which a mind can be placed, is to be for ever haunted with the obligation of duty, without possessing a spirit for its discharge. Nor does the evil above alluded to, stop here. The young whose minds have been uninstructed in the nature and design of their baptism, are not only apt to renounce it by a course of ungodliness ; but, if subsequently converted, are exceedingly likely to renounce it by Christian profession. Hence the fact which frequently occurs of the children of Pædobaptists becoming Baptists. This occurrence, though much regretted by parents wherever it exists, always results from an adequate course in the education of children. How is it possible, for a child who does not at all understand, either the authority, the nature, or the advantages, of his early consecration to God, either to value that consecration, or to confirm it by his own per-

sonal act? The fault in every such case is the parent's, though the misfortune is the child's.

7. The misunderstanding and neglect connected with the ordinance of Infant Baptism, have also introduced great laxity of government into families. The importance of domestic training and discipline, has probably never received sufficient attention from men generally. They contemplate the church and the state—they dwell with enthusiasm upon any thing connected with these larger establishments; but overlook, in a great measure, those simple elements in the family, which subsequently develop themselves in the larger societies of men. The government of families has been regarded too much as a kind of “*sanctum sanctorum*,” Holy of Holies; into which none but its own high priest might properly enter. The civil law, from its very nature, can but throw its protection around these embryo kingdoms. It can hold its head accountable as a citizen, and compel him to discharge his duties as such. It can also regulate the descent and distribution of property. But farther it cannot go. It is the very province of religion to enter this sacred temple and adjust its minutest concerns. It is her high privilege to define and regulate all its relationships and obligations, and thus sweetening the very fountain of human existence, to make that existence the richest blessing. If then religion, preceding in her very nature, as she does by her obligations, all external civil establishments, alone dares to sit as empress upon the family throne, and to rule its inmates by her wise and benevolent sceptre; who does not see, that every thing having the remotest tendency to weaken her dominion, poisons the very springs of life, and introduces

incipient anarchy and confusion among the societies of men? The very parent of the church, and the firmest friend of the state, she prepares her family subjects both for the one and the other. By maintaining a most invariably just government, she prepares the inmate of the family either to rule well himself, or to submit with promptness to a superior administration. The family is the very school and nursery of both church and state. Here those intellects receive their birth, and those principles their direction, which afterwards determine the destinies of men. Here lie encradled, the renowned statesman, the eloquent orator, the profound sage, the able theologian, the chanting bard, the burning seraph and the wailing fiend. Thus the family is not only the fountain of all human societies, and its simple elements the sturdy principles of mighty governments, but it is the very source from which are peopled the worlds of happiness and woe. This being the fact, it is not only easy to see, that the Supreme Legislator must have guarded this institution in a peculiar degree, but that every attempt, either direct or indirect, to throw down or weaken the bulwark he has thus placed around it, is as dangerous to human society, as it is offensive to God. Now, that infant consecration is the great visible and defined rampart that God has thrown around the family, is evident from its very nature. Those obligations which grow out of the relationships existing between parent and child, are latent and often overlooked. But in the ordinance of infant baptism, they are recognized and embodied in a visible form. The parent acknowledges before God, that he perceives them, and that he feels the duties which they originate. The ordinance of infant

dedication being thus the embodying and recognition of more unperceived obligations, becomes in *efficiency* what the obligations themselves are. In *fact, it is but those obligations collected in a set form and exhibited before the mind*. Now, that the undermining or shaking of the ordinance of infant membership, is but the undermining and shaking of the obligations existing between parents and children is plain, since, as has been shown, the one is in *form* what the other is in *principle*. They stand in the very same relation to each other, that the public ordinances of religion do to its more latent obligations. Now, he must be a novice in understanding as well as in observation, who does not at once perceive, that the man who destroys the external ordinances of religion, destroys likewise its internal principles. They stand or fall together. Just so he who destroys the family ordinance of Pædobaptism—that sacred bulwark which a wise God has thrown around the early elements of society, does at the same time injure and corrupt the religion of the family.

That the prevailing abuses of this ordinance should have injured family discipline and piety, and thus have perverted the very elements of society, is as natural as it is lamentable. These injurious effects are first to be noticed in the families of believing parents themselves. As their notions on the subject under discussion have been loose, so they have misunderstood the spirituality of their relationship to their children, and have selected as the end of early education, objects perfectly foreign to the design of God. Thus, mistaking the very design of juvenile training, they have erred in every other particular; and

have often made their offspring prominent in any thing but virtue and holiness. This fundamental error naturally renders family order exceedingly irregular and lax. Children, whom it is the purpose of God according to this institution, to have trained up in his fear, are neglected, unrestrained, uninstructed, and often become the most giant-like of sinners. They know religion but to hate it; and recognize its institutions but to trample them under foot. That this is lamentably the state of things now in the world, I appeal to the observation of every one,—and that it is worse in those sections of country where the ordinance of infant baptism is but little understood or violently opposed, I also appeal to the consciences of any who have observed.

Now, this being the state of family government among the pious themselves, the state of things becomes worse among the impenitent and unbelieving. From whatever cause it arises, it is nevertheless true, that men of the world always suppose, that there should be a certain gradation between the pious and the wicked. Some too seem to observe this gradation with the exactest scrupulosity. They mark and accurately define the ground which lies between Christian obligation and natural licentiousness. They are extremely exact not to be too pious—not to approach too nigh the church. And, as this is true of individuals, so it is likewise true of families. Wherever, therefore, there is great laxity of domestic government among the pious, there will exist still greater latitudinarianism on this point amongst the ungodly. And this is invariably the fact. The church must ever form the manners

of the world. Wherever, then, the state of morals is deficient in a church, either in individuals or families, the state of things must be deplorably bad out of the church.

8. Great irregularity in the church is likewise an evil connected with the existing state of the institution of Pædobaptism, and immediately growing out of it. God certainly has made the family, not only the introductory institution into the state, but into the church also. The family stands in the same relation to the church, that the church itself bears to Heaven. Man is a moral being, whose principles and character are in a very great degree the result of habit. It is easy for him to yield to his previously formed habits; it is difficult to resist them. Now, although the transfer of man from a state of unbelief to one of faith, involves in it a change in his habits to a certain extent; yet does it by no means change at all many of them, nor does it always eradicate others. Habits become in a certain sense parts of our physical nature. As, therefore, in conversion, there is no change of our physical natures, save as to their tendencies and uses; so the change in our habits are not always as thorough as is imagined. Some of them fall into alliance with the new principle which is superinduced in the soul by grace, others, again, fall under the standard of the old man, and often become his most chosen champions. This then being the very nature of man, it is easy to perceive that unless the family society be applied to its appropriate ends—the *training of men for more elevated spheres*—its members must be but illy fitted to act their parts in those higher responsibilities to which they are called. The offspring of such households never can be prepared for the

faithful and proper discharge of the superior and more solemn duties of the church. In the first place, they must be but novices in information. Having never learned, how can they know? Having never been faithfully indoctrinated in the truths of Revelation, how can they possibly understand those truths? In the second place, their vicious practices will have a vast advantage over their virtuous principles. The latter have but recently been introduced into the soul—the former have long been its inmates. The one are measurably weak, the other have become inveterate by age. Thus the spiritual warfare is commenced with a great disadvantage. Sin has so intrenched itself in its almost impregnable fortresses, that though the soul is by special contract given to holiness, yet is the possession of the territory enjoyed by the superinduced principle, rather future and certain, than immediate and complete. The soul thus resembles the countries given to ancient Israel, but still held in possession by their enemies, whose inhabitants were numerous, and whose cities were walled up to heaven—though given to Israel by Divine promise, yet, under the dominion of inveterate foes in point of fact. Men under such circumstances never can be regular, holy, and useful Christians, in any great degree. They are saved but as by fire! Another evil to the church growing out of neglected family discipline is, that such members make, often, neither good rulers nor subjects. Having never been properly instructed in the nature and mode of moral government, it is impossible for them to administer it aright. And having never been properly under its control, it is not very likely they will be the most tractable under its influence. Thus, they are not only likely to in-

troduce the same evils into their own families when parents, but to introduce them likewise into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, when they become members of that kingdom. That those evils do now very greatly exist in the church, is evident. Very great irregularity and insubordination, lamentably characterize the churches of the present day.

LECTURE II.

METHODS OF REMOVING THE ABOVE EVILS.

IF what has been stated above, be any thing like a correct representation of the present state of things in reference to the institution under discussion, surely it must be most desirable to have these evils removed. The following lecture will therefore be devoted to a brief specification of some of the modes by which, it is hoped, this ordinance may be vindicated from its present abuses, and be made to hold that prominence in the church which its value demands, and its gracious author intended.

1. My first remark is, that more real importance must be attached to the ordinance itself. Men are prone to extremes. Because the types and ceremonies of the ancient Jews measurably retired at the introduction of Christianity ; and really seem in the discussions of the New Testament to be placed even below their real though former value ; and because the Romish hierarchy have introduced many false symbols into the Christian church ; and probably because men in all ages have been inclined to superstition on these several accounts, many at the present day seem to place but the slightest value upon external

forms. But does not the very fact, I would ask, that God has always connected external symbols with his worship, and that men have been prone to multiply them, demonstrably show, that their necessity is deeply inlaid in the very nature of things. Why is it, too, that the present state of things exerts such an engrossing influence over men, if it be not, that "temporal things are things that are seen." The very tangibility of worldly avocations gain them attention, and give them importance. And the very same principle obtains in matters of religion. What makes symbols useless and vague, and even ridiculous, is their not being of divine appointment. I appeal to any man, if the solemn stillness of a Christian sabbath where it is properly observed, or the evangelical celebration of the Lord's supper, or the proper administration of Christian baptism, does not strike his soul in tones of eloquence to which no human tongue in mere description is adequate. In all such cases the senses assist the mind, and the impression of the truth becomes irresistible. It is true, that it is the ultimate influence of truth upon *the heart and conscience* that is of real and abstract value; but, then, if the visibility of its form be the best method of reaching the heart and conscience, the external symbol which affords that visibility is likewise of proportional importance. The implanting of truth in the mind, is the *end* of religious instruction; but in order to this, visible types become, though not the only, yet an important *means*.

The importance of imagery in divine worship being thus sanctioned by God himself in every age of the church, as well as deeply founded in the very nature of man, the only question as to the importance of any external ordi-

nance whatever, is, whether it be of divine appointment. This being proved, the value of the ordinance is at once established, nor can any debates whatever as to the non-essentiality of the ordinance to salvation at all interfere with its importance to the ends for which it was appointed. That there may be salvation without the administration of a certain gospel ordinance is evident; but, that that same gospel ordinance may, in a certain connection of causes and events, be essential under given circumstances to the salvation of the soul, is likewise evident. Now, with most of those to whom I am addressing these pages, it is admitted to be a revealed duty, that a believing parent should baptize his offspring. The divine obligation to observe this ordinance is admitted; and yet, compliance with it is regarded as merely optional, as of but little value. And it is this very conduct on the part of many Pædobaptists that has gained them the unenviable title of "blind guides to the blind." It is this very inconsistency that has started the surmise in some, and the unblushing charge in others, that they are holding to an absolute and superstitious rite, the authority of which they cannot establish, and the benefits of which they cannot appreciate.

But to undervalue and neglect the ordinance of infant baptism, is not only to sin against God, but against the *rights* of our children. Have they, according to the gracious purpose of God, a right to church membership? Have they a right to the united prayers and efforts of a praying community in their behalf? Have they a gracious and natural right to a most pious religious training? Have they offered to them through their parents all the benefits of the new and everlasting covenant? Is God willing, in

this method, to become in a peculiar sense *their* God and Father? Do our children enjoy all these advantages, both by natural and divine right? If so, how sacrilegious, how awfully sinful, the conduct by which all these advantages become a mere nullity, or, I had better say, a curse! Oh if I had power to awaken a church to a deep concern for an ordinance of God, almost become obsolete by neglect; if I could arouse in parents a proper interest on this subject, I would roll my voice from one border of Zion to another,—I would call upon the fathers, now as grey with wisdom as with age, and our pioneers in the ways of righteousness and duty,—I would call upon the sturdy watchman on Zion's walls,—I would call upon those who are appointed the guardians of the purity and truth of the church, and I would call upon parents by whose neglect the dear lambs of the flock have held too long, unequal contests with the wolves and the bears that prowl around the Saviour's fold,—I would call upon all, to awake to the importance of this neglected institution.

2. A second method to remove the evils in question is, that the wise and good of our church should bestow more time and talent in the clear and scriptural elucidation of this ordinance. Much has been written, and well written, we are aware, in its defence; but still, we think ourselves supported by fact in the statement, that the subject has not received from divines that profound attention, and that deep research, which its great importance and existing state loudly demand. The principles of the institution need to be more thoroughly examined, its duties more clearly unfolded, and the scriptural facts which assert its divine authority, more closely and strikingly arranged.

Nor need any suppose that the subject has been exhausted. Like most other revealed principles, it will admit of indefinite explication. I am one of those who, so far from believing that the present fund of information on hand, excludes future discovery and progress, firmly believe, that this very fact but invites to greater improvements and ensures success. Nature, Providence, and Revelation, the three great volumes in which God has revealed himself to man, partaking much of that mysteriousness which invests the divine nature ; while they contain much that is plain, and much that has been discovered, contain likewise much that is obscure and not understood. The truths of revelation resemble infinite lines projected from the throne of God, and terminated at the earth. Now, although such lines might appear simple and plain in their earthly terminations, yet, as they should be pursued into the divine mind itself, they would become infinitely grand and mysterious. Thus the truth which a lisping child may understand in its terrestrial disclosures, the burning seraph may in vain attempt to comprehend in its divine origination. Yet as it is right for that child to grasp those plainer points, so it is right for that more exalted intelligence to contemplate and examine its more hidden principle. Now, the ordinance of infant membership must have as its fixed basis, certain established principles—certain reasons, either in the nature of things or their connection, upon which it rests. God is an infinitely intelligent being : he never acts but from the wisest and best of motives. And even many of those things in his conduct which appear to us to be but arbitrary, are the results of the most permanent and important principles. This then being the case with this

institution, as with all others, the tracing and defining of these principles, and deducing thence the appropriate practical results, must be a field of investigation on this subject, as interesting as it would be valuable. Besides, the revealed obligation of this ordinance standing, in a great degree, on the connection between the Jewish polity and the Christian church; the Old and the New Testaments, to ascertain and exhibit those grand and leading principles which pervade each of these systems; and especially to show, that that upon which this institution rests, is one of them; must furnish, from the very nature of the subject, scope for the acutest intellect, and advantage sufficient for the most aspiring mind. The collection, too, of all the revealed facts that support this institution, and their clear and proper arrangement, furnish likewise a large and interesting field of inquiry.

Nor let it be objected to here, that such procedure is more apt to establish a particular theory, than to ascertain truth. The method by which most of the splendid errors that now obtain, gained their existence was, the renunciation of *fundamental principles* in the investigation of truth. But, if on the contrary, these be always adhered to, and be but the test of more remote discoveries, then the boldest attempts of intellect in the unfolding of that which is dark and mysterious, will always be safe and profitable. This has been the method by which all true philosophers have guided their inquiries, and this is the mode of investigation pursued by all sound and truly able divines. This is the very course that nature herself points out—and it is the only one by which we may aspire and yet be safe.

Nor let it be objected, that this subject is so invested

with religious controversy, that it is not only unpleasant of investigation, but that such investigation is likely to lead to deleterious consequences. What doctrine or duty, I would ask, in these days, is not associated with disputes? If, therefore, we must not investigate for fear of debate and contradiction, then must we renounce altogether our efforts after the discovery of truth. Besides, controversy itself when fairly conducted but elicits the truth. It is like the efforts of gold-diggers after the pure metal. All that those who oppose us can require, is, but courtesy and candor—and surely no mind incapable of either, is fit to enter upon this or any other field of investigation. Let, then, those minds, which have been less usefully employed in researches after truth elsewhere, be turned with all their energies to this more important, because more practical field of inquiry. Let the subject be more ably, more thoroughly handled, and let it be placed before our churches in a more *visible and tangible form*.

3. A third method of removing the evils in question, is, that our church judicatories be more strict in enforcing compliance with this part of our excellent Confession of Faith. This embraces four particulars.

First, That the supervision and general control of higher judicatories be more decided and distinct on this part of our Discipline. Our church is certainly one of the best representative governments on earth. In its very construction it is equally guarded against both tyranny and licentiousness—it enjoys uniformity yet freedom. Still in the hands of its administrators it may be supposed *capable* of suffering from either of these sources. Now that under existing circumstances it is more liable to suf-

fer from the latter than from the former evil is evident. We not only live under a free civil government—but this is emphatically an age of free discussion. Every one, too, is anxious to enter the list and rear his trophy. The extent also of our territory is very great—our numbers large and our manners and customs different. Now that under these circumstances we are more apt to split than combine—to introduce error rather than to be too strict in the enforcement of truth, is perfectly manifest. This being the case, and our higher judicatories being expressly formed to prevent these evils, and to maintain the “*unity*” of the whole church, it certainly is obligatory on them to be very cautious and accurate in their supervision, the more so, because silence in them at the introduction of error, either in practice or doctrine, will be regarded as sanction of those errors, by our very highest ecclesiastical courts.

On the subject under debate, our Confession of Faith, which is the standard of our highest courts as well as of ordinary membership, is very explicit and excellent. In chap. xxviii, sec. iv, it employs these words: “Not only those who do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also *the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.*” In the answer to the 166th question of the larger catechism, it thus exhibits the sentiments of our church. “Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him: *but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the*

covenant, and are to be baptized." In chap. vii of the Directory for Worship, the mode of baptizing the child is particularly delineated. Among other things, it is there specially taught, that "*Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed;*" that "*It is usually to be administered in the church,*" though, under extraordinary circumstances, it may "be expedient to administer it in private houses." The minister, too, is there enjoined to explain to his audience its authority, nature, and benefits, as well as to enforce upon the parents its appropriate duties. In chap. ix, and i, of the same Directory, it is clearly stated, that "children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, *are under the inspection and government of the church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostle's Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord's supper.*"

Now, certainly, the charge of obscurity on this subject cannot be brought against this venerable standard of doctrine and discipline. What is necessary is, that its teachings be heard and complied with. And if the question be asked, how are the high judicatories to extend their supervision and control over this ordinance? my reply is, in the same way that they extend them over any other branches of our discipline. Let them only make it a matter of suffi-

cient importance, and the mode of its accomplishment will be easy enough.

A second particular embraced in the preceding article is, that more pains be taken to instruct candidates for the ministry in the nature and authority of this ordinance, previously to their being ordained bishops or evangelists. Our church has always held and maintained, in her theory at least, the great importance of eminent ministerial qualification. The importance of this must be obvious to all. But still, in many cases, young men have been thrust into the ministry, but with very little furniture for their great and arduous work. In all such cases, their views of this ordinance, which forms the subject of these treatises, as well as of other gospel truths and ordinances, must of course be superficial. Nor will the evil stop with them. They will introduce great irregularity, and often great errors into the churches over which they preside. But even in the most elaborate preparations for the gospel ministry amongst us, it is to be feared, that this institution is not sufficiently made a matter of study. I would not have it raised to an improper prominence in a theological course. But I do contend, that it should hold its own appropriate importance. This importance, it is my firmest conviction, is generally denied it.

Thirdly, there should also be more pains taken in the ordaining of elders. The eldership in our church is an important auxiliary to the ministry. They are, I think, in the view of our Confession of Faith, as well as of the word of God, every thing that ministers are, with the exception of preaching and the administration of the ordinances.

Certainly, then, they ought to be, not only pious and zealous men, but orthodox and intelligent. If they should not go regularly through a theological course in one of our seminaries, they at least should study closely and accurately the word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the various doctrines, duties, and practices, common to Presbyterianism. In fact, these are the very men from whom we are to expect the greatest advantage, or to derive the greatest harm. They are not, like the minister of a particular congregation, *one*, but *many*. They are, too, the representatives of the people ; they mix more in their society, and are less chargeable with "*priestcraft*," than ministers are. It is, too, through that lower judicatory, in which they are generally more numerous than the ministers, that persons are introduced into our church. They thus, in a very significant sense, keep "*the keys*" of the Presbyterian church,—admit or reject whom they may. Now under such circumstances, it is of *essential* importance, that they be good theologians, as well as pious and active Christians. And we hesitate not to say, that that church which has elected, and that minister who has ordained an elder, unacquainted with the doctrines and forms of our church, has abused that church, and perverted the very nature of the eldership, as well as deeply afflicted themselves.

But fourthly, more accuracy should be observed in the admission of private members. The very hurried and irregular mode of introducing members into our churches, which now exists to a very great extent, is an evil which cannot be too much deprecated. Our church system is very organic. It contemplates a *regular training previous*

to the admission of members. When, therefore, we venture on new territory, and take those into our bosom who have never enjoyed such *regular training*, it becomes us to be exceedingly cautious. There often may exist, along with an apparent but spurious conversion, the most *fatal* errors; and there often may exist along with real conversions, most *mischievous* errors. If, then, persons, under such circumstances, be introduced into the church, and from possessing some brilliant qualities, should be made officers in the church, the evil becomes almost incurable. Instead of introducing in such a case a *helper* into our Christian community, we have introduced but a *viper*, to distress and annoy us. It is in this way, that our church in most new countries, resembles Jacob's herds, or Joseph's coat,—*it has many colors, both in doctrine and practice.* And probably, if the truth were ascertained, on no doctrine and duty are we more irregular, than on those in question. So great is the evil now, that many members, and many elders, (and for shame I say it,) many ministers too, seem to doubt, whether, according to our discipline, the baptism of the parent *necessarily involves the baptism of his child*,—and whether it be not consistent enough with Presbyterianism, to fill the church with *pædo-unbaptizing* members! The only remedy to such an evil, is for church sessions to *keep the keys better.*

4. Another mode of remedying the abuses of the ordinance of pædobaptism is, for it to be more frequently and more forcibly exhibited from the pulpit. The pulpit is an admirable means of inculcating divine truth. Men as a multitude are not too much given to reading. They especially will read nothing, or very little, that conflicts with

their prejudices and prepossessions. This being the case, their prejudices, and prepossessions and ignorance are to be assailed from the sacred desk. What would become of the Gospel if it were not preached? And what would become of any doctrine or ordinance of the Gospel, if excluded from the pulpit? Not, therefore, to introduce the subject of Infant Baptism into the desk, is but to preach the Gospel *partially*; or rather, it is but to surrender a Gospel ordinance of infinite value, to the false delicacy of a man-pleasing spirit; and thereby to yield the victory to the adversary without even an effort to obtain it. No sectary by feeling or practice, I am farthest possible from urging the indiscriminate and injudicious introduction of this or any other subject into the pulpit. The whole Gospel is to be preached discreetly; and certainly this institution also. I do insist, however, upon the more frequent and lucid discussion of this topic in the presence of our ordinary audiences. And, I insist upon it, on account of its intrinsic value, its neglected state, and its frequently occurring practical obligations. Our people will not comply with an ordinance, the nature and benefits of which they do not perceive: nor can they be expected to perceive the advantages and obligations of an institution, in which they have never been properly instructed. Nor let it be objected against this course, that our assemblies are mixed, and therefore, it would be unpleasant to discuss such a subject. If we wait until our audiences are all harmonious, then shall we be compelled to relinquish very much, if not all, of Gospel truth. Only let us discuss the subject in a proper manner and with a proper spirit, and then leave the result with God. If it be asked, how often should this

discussion be introduced before an audience, my answer is, *just so often as to keep them well informed on the subject*. This will require greater frequency in some churches, less frequency in others.

5. Another important method of removing these evils, is, frequently and carefully to instruct baptized children. In our Directory for Worship, as above quoted, it is particularly stated, that “children born within the pale of the visible church, and dedicated to God in baptism, are under the inspection and government of the church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostle’s Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God, and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady, and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord’s Supper.

A large portion of the above duties must of course devolve upon the parent. It is through the double relationship in which he stands to God and his child to him, that his offspring is admitted to baptism. His child, too, is immediately under his control, and almost ever in his presence. He has also promised in the baptism of his offspring, to be faithful to his moral and religious training. For a parent after all this, to neglect his child—not repeatedly to inform him of his baptism and his duty—is most wicked and injurious. Nor can we ever expect, in a solitary case, the ends of infant baptism to be attained, where the appropriate means are neglected. Parents who neglect their baptized offspring, are guilty of the complex

and multiplied offence, of *insulting God, wronging the child, injuring the church, and prostituting an ordinance of the gospel.*

But there is, according, both to the nature of the institution and our book of discipline, a supervision which the church in her officers and members is to extend over a baptized child. This supervision should extend both to the parent and the child. The church is bound to see that the parent be faithful to his vows in this matter—that, after baptizing his offspring, he raise him as becometh a Christian child, and not as a young heathen. The child, too, should also be addressed, prayed with, catechised, and urged onward in the Christian course. Nor do those officers of churches, who neglect such duties to the lambs of the flock, comply either with the word of God, or our discipline. And I solemnly fear, that the blood of many a baptized child will eventually be found in the skirts of those who are its appointed and necessary spiritual guardians.

These constitute a summary of those methods, which it seems to me, of very high importance, to be observed, in order to redeem our church from error, an ordinance of God from disrepute and disgrace, and the souls of our children from eternal ruin. And I cannot close this lecture, without most solemnly calling upon the whole church, to awake to her duty. The cause of truth requires it, the interests of our church requires it, and the salvation of our households require it. And it is greatly to be feared, that if something be not done, and soon done, the confusion which now belongs to this institution, will be increased a hundred fold, and the proper remedy be infinitely harder to be found.

LECTURE III.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE MODE OF PROOF BY WHICH PÆDO-BAPTISM IS ESTABLISHED, CONSIDERED.

I HAVE already suggested, that the subject of Pædo-baptism has not been, probably, as clearly elucidated as its importance demands, and as the subject itself will admit. Still, however, enough has been written to establish, in the minds of the candid, the divine authority and beneficial tendency of this institution, were there not counteracting obstacles in the mode of proof, by which its obligation is attempted to be confirmed. That these difficulties do really exist, will be admitted by all who have paid the subject the least attention. It is exceedingly difficult so to collect, arrange and exhibit the arguments in favor of this ordinance, as to remove all doubt from the mind of the common hearer or reader; especially when that mind has received a previous bias against the ordinance itself. In treating of these difficulties, it is my design, *first*, to show that *their existence* does not, in the least, destroy either the proof itself, or the institution which that proof goes to establish: and then, *secondly*, I shall attempt to point out what those difficulties are.

I. The existence of *difficulties* in the mode of proof by which the ordinance of infant baptism is established, does not destroy either the proof itself, or the institution which that proof goes to support. It is a very common sentiment in the minds of many, that *that* which is not *expressly revealed in the Bible in so many words*, is not a part of divine revelation, and therefore false. This sentiment has prevailed on no subject more than in respect to the institution in question. Now, to say nothing concerning the difficulty of establishing *what is revealed truth*, even according to this principle itself, arising from the literal and tropical meaning of scriptural words, and other circumstances; *the principle itself is contrary to two established facts.* The first of these is, that God may be said, justly enough, to reveal to us any truth whatever, when he has placed that truth within the reach of the faculties he has given us. It would contradict the very nature of man for God to have revealed to him, with perfect clearness, all truth at once. Existence, under such circumstances, would have become a dull monotony, and his possession of the most exalted faculties, a source of the acutest sufferings. The very nature of man, then, clearly proves, that truths, which it was God's intention for him to know, were revealed to his mind with different degrees of perspicuity. Some were placed nearer to him, others more remote, and others again still further in the distance. Some he saw with entire accuracy, others were more obscured, and others again, for a time, covered with *apparently* impenetrable gloom. All who have in the least observed the dealings of God with men, know that this is, in point of fact, the mode in which he has revealed himself to our species.

It is true in Nature, in Providence, and in Revelation. Although, with regard to the first, "the works of God were finished from the foundation of the world," yet, how gradually progressive has been the knowledge which men have acquired of those works? The boundary of man's knowledge at first, did not extend much beyond the spot of ground on which he stood. But now, how very extensive the horizon which encircles the brow of human science? As to Divine Providence, how mystical and dark were its traces in the eyes of mortals at first? But now, how angel-eyed is the faith which, piercing the curtaining darkness that surrounds the throne, contemplates with delight the smiling countenance of Him who sits thereon? The same is also true in reference to divine revelation. That the writings of the Holy Scriptures were given to man at different periods, and that a principle, but obscurely recognized at an earlier period, was in a remote one more clearly unfolded, none will deny. And even now that revelation has been completed nearly eighteen centuries, is there a gradual disclosure of its contents progressively going on under the eye and according to the will of Him who is its all-wise author. The revelation of God's will to man did not cease when the mere *wording* of that revelation ended. And he who is now zealous, yet humble and cautious in the exposition of that wonderful monument of divine wisdom and mercy to man, is but filling up the list of prophets and apostles, and following in the line of those who shall constitute pillars in the kingdom of God above. This gradual development of himself to man, constitutes one of the most glorious principles in the divine administration. It necessarily arises out of the very nature of God, and of his

creature, man. Nor can it ever cease. And even in eternity must there ever exist those distinctions in the moral world, which comport so well with those in the natural world here; there will be *light*, *twilight*, and *darkness*; that which is clear, that which is uncertain, and that which is mysterious. This, too, is the principle, according to which human faculties are developed, and human enterprises accomplished, even in this world. The attainment of knowledge, how gradual,—the performance of labor, how progressive! See the mother, as she teaches her child to use its limbs in the necessary exercise of walking. She first teaches it to take but a few steps: she then increases the number; and so gradually makes her little pupil an adept in the art of walking. It is in the same way the great God teaches his offspring to exert their faculties in prying into his counsel and will. Now, that that which God has put within the reach of our faculties to ascertain, is a part of those things which “are revealed and belong to us and our children,” and that He has revealed to us most of our knowledge just in this way, is evident. If so, why may not the institution in question be revealed according to this method? Why may not *sufficient evidence* of its divine authority be afforded, and yet that evidence placed, *not out of our power*, but just beyond the limit of the most manifest perspicuity? It is so in many other things equally important; then why not so as to this?

But the principle, that men only stand accountable for a doctrine, when such doctrine is exhibited to them *with perfect perspicuity*, proves *infinitely* too much. The Jew, in the life-time of Christ, never supposed that even *he* had enough of *clear and manifest* evidence of the Messiahship

of the Saviour. In the midst of all he saw, he still called for a “*sign* ;” he wished different kind of evidence, and desired it in greater quantity. But was that Jew, therefore, exempt from the woes denounced against that nation ? The infidel too, at the present day, supposes that gospel truth is not clearly enough revealed to his perceptions : he too asks for miracles,—for greater evidence. But is he innocent while he renounces revelation, because, as he supposes, not made more clear and obvious ? The heathen world too, may, upon this principle, be justified in all their idolaries and abominations. They enjoy, comparatively, but the shadows of that truth in whose broad blaze we live. But are they innocent ? The sinner, too, who has blunted all his moral convictions and impressions of the truth, will probably also urge, in extenuation of his unbelief, that he needs more light. The truth is, we are accountable, not only for what is *manifestly* revealed, but *for what is put within the reach of our abilities*.

The second fact which contradicts the sentiment above is, that truths *clearly enough revealed in themselves*, yet may not be *equally plain to all men*. Many circumstances will produce this result. Difference in intellectual faculties will produce it. In order to understand many of the revealed truths of the Bible, it requires intellects of the first order. Now, certainly, those whose natural capacities are not so good, cannot be said to have those truths revealed to them as clearly and forcibly as they are to the more talented. Again, difference in intellectual and moral culture, will produce different degrees of *accuracy of perception* in relation to the truth ; and, therefore, it cannot be said to stand forth with *equal clearness* to both classes,—

the refined and the rude, the pious and the wicked. The language, and the manners and customs of different nations, will necessarily render the capabilities and facilities of understanding clearly revealed truths, different in different countries. Thus, to the ancient Jew, and probably to the Asiatic now, the language of Scripture, its mode of instruction, and the figures it employs, would all be more familiar, and consequently more plain, than to us. Variations too, in point of time, also produce differences in ability to comprehend aright what has been clearly revealed in the written word. Thus, to the ancients who saw the persons, witnessed the miracles, and heard the instructions of the Saviour, of Apostles and Prophets, many things would be more clear than to us now adays. On the contrary, many things now appear more satisfactory and evident to us, than they possibly could have appeared to them. Besides, the errors and prejudices heaped upon divine truth though clearly enough revealed at first, constitute a mist and darkness through which the mind may not be able, or able only with great difficulty, to perceive the truth. All these circumstances taken together, show very clearly, that even where divine truth is in itself plainly revealed, yet it is not revealed with equal clearness to all men. And this must be the case, no matter in what nation or age the revelation was given.

Now if the two facts illustrated above be considered, viz. that God really reveals his truth to man, when he puts it in the reach of his abilities to ascertain it; and also, that from circumstances which invariably exist, even truth, that is clearly revealed, is not revealed with equal perspicuity to all men; if these facts, I say, be considered, the

fallacy of the above sentiment will at once appear. *It is not therefore true, that what is not clearly revealed in so many words, is therefore not a truth of Revelation, and consequently false.* Now, in proving this, we have also established, as was proposed, that the existence of difficulties in the mode of proof by which the ordinance of infant baptism is established, does not destroy either the proof itself, or the institution which that proof goes to support. And the reason is manifest; because the proof may be quite sufficient, though we may not clearly perceive it.

II. I now proceed to show what are some of the difficulties alluded to above.

I. These difficulties exist, in the first place, in the *quantity* of proof necessary in order to produce unshaken confidence in the mind, as to the validity of the ordinance of infant baptism. Where the several arguments that support a cause are each of them sufficient and independent, the quantity of such evidence but strengthens the conviction which each argument by itself begets. But, where there is a large amount of evidence, all going to establish the same fact, yet no particular part of that evidence demonstrating that fact by itself, there the quantity of evidence often becomes an inconvenience to those, who are obliged to resort to such evidence for proof. The reasons why this is so, are these. In the first place, it is more difficult to collect and arrange the amount of testimony so as to produce conviction. The evidence is abundant, but scattered—it is sufficient, but not combined. In order, therefore, to collect and carefully arrange such evidence, it requires much of judgment and attention. Another reason is, that it is more difficult to produce conviction in

the minds of the common people by such a quantity of evidence so widely scattered, because it fatigues their attention and renders them restless. Not accustomed to think very closely on any one subject, and such close thinking being therefore very disagreeable, no common hearer may be expected to give a candid and patient attention to so long a train of argumentation. Another reason is, that the mind naturally seems to fix itself more upon *one point* in an argument, than to take a comprehensive view of a whole field of evidence. The process in the one case is simple, in the other more complex and enlarged. Probably most of the common people, who are the abettors of any one cause whatever, however abundant the proof by which that cause may be substantiated, yet leave the whole territory of argument, with the exception of one solitary fortress. In this they entrench themselves and feel perfectly secure. And if their favorite strong-hold should be successfully assailed by their superior antagonist, instead of yielding it and taking more advantageous positions, they will even support themselves by prejudice where argument may fail them. All who are accustomed to debate with the multitude, know, that this is very much the case. This, too, is natural as well as common; for the mind, seizing hold of one distinct point becomes more settled upon it, and more familiarized to it. Hence it becomes a weapon more easily wielded, and with which the mind is more pleased than any other. Now, this being man's nature as well as practice, where a cause is to be supported, not by a solitary argument, but by a whole field of proof, conviction is not so easily produced.

Now, that the proof substantiating the ordinance in

question is, in a great measure of the character above described, is evident to all, who have paid the subject any proper attention. The amount of evidence is not small and direct, but abundant and indirect. Hence in the wielding of such testimony the supporter of Pædobaptism must necessarily labor under great inconvenience, especially with common hearers.

2. Not only the *quantity*, but the *quality* of the evidence, by which Pædobaptism is established, furnishes also an additional impediment in the way of producing the most satisfactory conviction. This evidence as above suggested is rather *circumstantial* as a whole, than direct. It is drawn not so much from any *one plain and unquestionable text*, as it is from the general scope and analogy of the Scriptures. But, is there any good reason, I would ask, why such evidence when strong should not beget in the mind the most perfect satisfaction? To this I would reply in the negative; and for the two following reasons.

First, from the very nature of the case. By the circumstances of an event is meant its antecedents, and consequents, as well as its accompaniments. Now, if there be any sure connection between any of these and any one definite event whatever, as there must of course be; and if we ascertain certainly the existence of any of these circumstances themselves, then are we perfectly ascertained of the existence of that particular event, although there be no direct and positive proof of its having occurred. All that is necessary in order to beget in such a case the firmest faith, is to establish the *certainty* of the existence of the circumstances, and their *sure* connection with the event in question. If these two things be clearly

shown, then no positive proof whatever can warrant stronger confidence. Circumstances become in such a case *natural witnesses to the truth*. And as nature when she is properly understood has but one voice, so that voice when properly uttered never can fail to beget belief. Hence it is frequently remarked, and often by the common people, "circumstances cant lie." A living witness may be bribed to tell a lie, but when we ascertain the existence of certain things naturally and really connected with a particular event, we are obliged to believe in the existence of that event, unless there be stronger direct testimony to disprove its existence.

My second reason is, that men always do, in point of fact, put great confidence in circumstantial evidence. It is always rated along with living testimony, and often preferred to it; from the simple reason that men can much sooner deceive than nature. It is relied on in common life, in civil courts, in philosophy, and ought to be relied on in matters of religion. How often, when a report originates in a community of any importance either as to character or property, are all the circumstances traced and examined, and confided in? How often in civil courts does this sort of evidence decide the most important cases. And from what other sort of evidence is it, that most philosophical principles have been established? Before the globe was actually circumnavigated, the rotundity of the earth was settled from the three circumstances, that her shadow in a lunar eclipse was round; the mast of a ship at sea was the first part seen; and the polar star arose when one went north. The planets are believed to be inhabited by beings very similar to man, simply from the

circumstances of similarity between them and our earth. And so firm is this belief in the philosophic world, that he would be regarded as rude and vulgar, who should require, previous to belief, either a plain view of the fact in some great telescope not yet invented ; or who should probably prefer, that one of their inhabitants should make us a visit to establish such truth. If then, circumstances are thus universally relied upon as evidence, and often evidence of the first order, is it reasonable, I would ask, to exclude their testimony from the departments of religion ? Unquestionably not. And even those, who often urge the tenuity of the ground held by Pædobaptists, upon the principle of its being but circumstantial evidence, yet, as often stand upon the same ground of argument as the antagonists whom they thus injudiciously assail.

3. Another set of difficulties, not immediately in the mode of proof by which Pædobaptism is established, but connected with it, is to be found in the *present circumstances* of the debate on this subject.

The first of this sort which I will here mention is, the evil practices now existing in churches and families, that have grown out of the abuses into which this ordinance has fallen. It is always difficult to convince a man of the truth, who has either in his mind a strong determination not to obey it, or in his life an invincible habit that is contrary to it. In all such cases, the heart is apt to control the head ; and the sinner who is unwilling to obey the light, is apt to close his eyes against its reception. Now, in contemplating the state of families and churches, in respect to this institution, we find it most deplorably bad. The discipline of the church has been relaxed ; the proper

Christian government of the family has never existed,—and children have even grown up in the church, and yet never baptized at all! When, therefore, under circumstances of this sort, you attempt to “restore the old waste places,” and “repair the breaches,” you are met with insurmountable obstacles almost at every step. You have literally to prize up the whole Christian community, and put under it its proper foundations. You have to pull down whole churches and families, in order to construct them upon altogether different principles. And what is worst of all, you have to perform all this while men remain free agents in your hands, and as much embedded in their old habits of negligence and ignorance, as an old building is in the ruins of many generations. Any one who has attempted to change the manners and customs of a people, long used to such manners and customs, knows with what powerful resistance truth and duty always meet under such circumstances. When, therefore, a church ordinance has long been abused and neglected, as that of infant baptism has been, it is one of the most difficult things imaginable, even to convince the people of its abuses, and of the propriety and obligation of fulfilling their duty in this respect. But, however hard of execution, it is something that must be accomplished. A cancer never called louder for the knife of the surgeon, than do the abuses of this ordinance in our churches, for the immediate and efficient efforts of the pious and the influential for their speedy removal.

Another circumstance closely connected with the preceding is, the influence of early prejudice. Prejudice is always a great barrier to the reception of the truth. But when contracted in early life, and grown inveterate by age, it

becomes ordinarily so incorrigible, that no common weapons of assault are capable of its subjugation. And for my own part, I have never witnessed more stubborn prejudices of any sort, than those which now exist in many minds towards the ordinance under discussion. This sort of prejudice is blind and deaf, and rash and unyielding. It concedes nothing, but claims every thing. It is full of bigotry and self-confidence. It also possesses a kind of horror peculiar to itself,—one would think that its possessor were shocked at the sin against the Holy Ghost, when the simple idea of baptizing his child according to the requirement of God had passed across his mind. Prejudices of this very sort, in reference to this ordinance, exist not only among those who openly oppose it, but to the author's certain knowledge, even within the bounds of the Presbyterian church!! “*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur.*” Now, that persons whose whole souls are thus steeped in the bitterest of all prejudices, can never hear and decide candidly and fairly on this subject, is evident. No matter, therefore, how strong and irresistible are the arguments that establish the right of infants to baptism, yet they never can believe them. And why? *Because they have a prejudice against the ordinance itself.* A prejudice is the only reason, a prejudice their only argument. Now although such persons are greatly to be pitied, yet they are by no means to be excused. God accepts a *prejudice* in no case as an excuse for sin. It is always an aggravation of an offence.

Another difficulty with which Pædobaptists have to contend is, the ground upon which their opponents have placed the dispute. This ground is, the furnishing of

plain and explicit scriptural authority for the ordinance of infant baptism. Nor are they satisfied with any texts whatever, that according to the interpretation Pædobaptists put upon them, would *be plain and explicit scriptural authority*. They cavil at the texts thus furnished, and then triumphantly ask for more. Now, whether the motive for this course of conduct be to impose upon the more ignorant multitude by the semblance of truth, or an unwillingness to enter upon deeper examination of the subject; or from a disposition to be uncandid in argument,—from whatever source it arises, it is nevertheless very generally pursued: so much so, that almost the first question asked on the subject by those who have been raised under such teachings, when conversed with is, “whether you have any express undeniable scriptural warrant for infant baptism?” And if they are answered in the negative, which, according to the meaning put upon their words by themselves, probably will be the answer given, they immediately exult as if the victory were won; and the long debate which has agitated the church, were settled by a solitary question and answer. Hence too it is very common for a *bold denial* of infant baptism to be more powerful in argument, than the most elaborate collection and arrangement of all the evidence which proves it to be an institution of God, solemnly binding upon all professing Christians. Upon such a ground as this, any thing may be proved or denied. The principle of such debate is utterly false, and consequently its conclusions too. What would be thought, for instance, of the man, who after the rotundity of the earth and its annual revolution around the sun had been fairly demonstrated before his eyes upon

the very best mathematical principles, should yet turn upon his instructor and say, give me a *visible and self-evident* proof of these facts; and who, too, should actually refuse his assent, because such a *visible and self-evident* proof could not be furnished. Would the incapability of his teacher to furnish the kind of evidence required, or his own incredulity either, affect the truths themselves? Unquestionably not: all that such a circumstance could prove would be, that such a man were not only irrational in the demand, but grossly ignorant of the very first principles of philosophy. So, too, when a hearer, turning away from all that accumulation of evidence by which this ordinance is established, triumphantly and haughtily asks for a *plain and self-evident* proof on the subject; plain too and self-evident but in *his* view of those terms,—when he thus demands one *certain* text in defiance of a large amount of a different kind of evidence; what does it prove, but his own ignorance of the very fundamental principles of all kinds of logic? For, who does not know that, as we become acquainted with a man's character not so much from any one act as from his whole deportment, so we ascertain gospel truth, not so much from any one statement, as from a general and comparative view of the whole Bible. Abstract texts in the Scriptures, like abstract actions in a man's life, may mean nothing by themselves, or something perfectly different from the design of the author. So that an isolated proof-text—the kind of evidence such persons demand—is in no case equivalent in point of validity to that kind of evidence which arises from the very nature of revelation, and which is founded upon its general scope, as well as upon a large number of parallel passages fairly in-

terpreted,—the kind of evidence which such persons usually reject with disdain.

The proper method of procedure, therefore, on the part of Pædobaptists, when such a ground of debate is demanded by their adversaries is, to assault the *ground itself*, show its fallacy,—and that they who would require it are but begging the question.

Such are some of the difficulties with which he who would raise a gospel ordinance from its low condition, has to contend. It is however delightful to reflect, that neither the ordinance itself, nor the proof by which it is supported, can, in themselves, be materially affected by these obstacles,—that far above the fogs of human ignorance and prejudice, immortal truth still ever shines with the same unsullied countenance.

LECTURE IV.

A DISCOURSE ON THE OBJECTS, MEANS, AND RESULTS OF EARLY EDUCATION.

IN contemplating the world around us, we behold nothing more connected with the good order of society, the happiness of man here, and the salvation of the soul hereafter, than the proper organization and management of families. And, yet, there is probably no institution conducted by men generally with less reference either to the obligation of the divine law, or the sound principles of practical wisdom. The very commonness of the institution seems to have divested it of importance, and to have rendered it less a subject of minute examination, than almost any other establishment whatever. Thus, whilst there are established systems on all the various branches of philosophy, as well as on almost all the other relations of life, this institution chiefly seems to be the prominent subject of neglect. Here system is optional, and principle wavering and unsteady. Neither the objects, the means, nor the ends of juvenile training seem to be well understood by men generally. The various families of which society is thus formed, resemble a large number of ships

at sea, which have lost both the points of the compass and the polar star. All sail, and each in his own direction. Some make one guess for the pole, others a different one, while the most sail but at the wildest random. Just so as to families: the very polar star of early education seems to have been lost, as well as the proper principles of conducting juvenile training to its appropriate ends. Children are numerous, and so are their teachers, yet there is no *settled point* towards which education is generally directed; and there are no well-defined systems of means, by which that point could be reached, even were it perceived.

Our academies and colleges, and our sabbath schools, it is true, furnish systems of education considerably adjusted and regulated. But, then, these are *foreign to the family*, and as they never can destroy parental obligation, so they never can supplant domestic training. Many parents seem to suppose, that if their children are sent to a good academy or college, and enjoy also, with these intellectual advantages, the privilege of moral and religious instruction, either in sabbath schools or churches, all the objects of juvenile education will be perfectly attained. But, how often is it, that the instructions of the pulpit and sabbath school are perverted and abused by the impiety and maladministration of family government? And how often do all the literary and scientific refinements of the academy and college, become but the mere decorations of vice, through those false principles implanted in the hearts of the young, under the very eyes of parents, before they entered those schools of philosophy! How often do parents receive as the result of twenty years anxiety, and expense, and hope, instead of the accomplished gentleman,

the acute scholar, or the useful Christian, the trifling coxcomb, the shallow sophist, or the refined profligate? Thus, instead of the education of a young man becoming, as it always ought to become, the means of his own promotion and happiness, of joy to his parents, and of lasting benefit to society, it is often converted into a sword, with which a ruined youth pierces both his own and his parents' hearts! These results are lamentably common; nor can they possibly exist but with an adequate cause. This cause will be found on examination, almost invariably, in the mode of family government. It is this, which as it has the earliest, so it has the most controlling and the most lasting influence upon the human mind. In order, therefore, to prevent profligacy in youth and degradation in manhood, we must not only begin with children, but *with children in the family*. This is the very source of public disorder and confusion; and it is here we must apply the remedy.

In the following discourse on the training of the young, it will be my design to present and illustrate the three following propositions: First, that the grand end of the great God in the appointment of juvenile education is, the promotion of his own glory in the salvation of men.

Secondly, I shall attempt to show that He has appointed the necessary and appropriate means for the securing of this end: and,

Thirdly, that when these means are diligently and properly employed, such end does invariably follow, as an appropriate result.

First. I am to show that the grand end of the great

God in the appointment of juvenile education is, the promotion of his own glory in the salvation of men.

1. The first argument by which it is proposed to establish this proposition, is to be found in the proper contemplation of the physical circumstances of human generation.

That the physical world is made in subserviency to the moral, cannot be denied; since, the moral is of much greater value, and seems always to be the end sought in the administration of physical nature. Whenever, therefore, we contemplate any one feature whatever of the natural world, we are to contemplate it in reference to its moral tendencies and results; since, it is in these moral tendencies and results that we are to look for the proper reason, both of the existence and character of that particular physical feature.

Now, although in contemplating the whole of existence, there is what may be called *a universal gradation of things*, yet, when we contemplate the several species of beings which constitute together the whole of existence, there are *two modes of existence distinctly to be observed,—these modes are, the fixed and the successive*. Of these the *fixed* may be regarded as the *original* one, the *successive* as the *secondary*. Thus, the mode of the divine existence, is *fixed*,—the same is true as to angels,—and we are informed in the Scriptures, that this shall be the kind of existence which saints from the earth shall hereafter enjoy throughout all eternity, for there “they neither marry nor are given in marriage.” On the contrary, the existence of man on the earth, as well as of all the various tribes of

animals and vegetables around him, is *successive*; generation succeeds to generation. This being neither the original mode of existence, nor that towards which even man himself is tending, the question naturally arises, "whence the difference? why this apparent deviation from an original principle?" To this question many answers might be given; though, as we hope to show, it will admit of one which is either plausible or satisfactory.

In the first place, it might be urged by some, that, as all the existences around man are successive, so, according to analogy, it was proper that his should be established upon the same basis. But to this it is enough to reply, that instead of supposing the mode of man's existence conformed to that of animals and plants around him, we are compelled, from his superiority over them, to believe, that their mode of existence was founded upon his. But, again, as most of them were designed to subserve the purposes of human life, and as human life was successive, so, in order to reach that end, it was necessary that they should be successive too. It might again be replied to the above question, that, since God desires the happiness of man here below, and since the exercise of his social affections in the family conduces very greatly to that end, therefore, to promote the happiness of man on earth, the mode of his existence was rendered successive. The objection to this answer is, that as a solution of the above question, it falls almost infinitely short. It assigns but the attainment of a temporal advantage, as the motive which influenced the divine mind in the establishment of one of the most important institutions in his government, as connected with the human species. Besides, it may be asked, that al-

though the exercise of what may be termed *man's family affections*, is connected with very high emotions of pleasure, yet, why the existence of these affections themselves? They certainly are but the adjustment of human nature to the relations and duties of a family. It was to make man a *family being* that they were bestowed upon him. But why was it necessary to render him a *family being*, but for the attainment of some *nobler object* not in the family itself, but to which the family relations wonderfully conduced.

Again, it might be urged as an answer to the above question, that as God always selects not only the wisest but the *simplest* mode of effectuating his purposes, and as he had designed to create a multitude of beings connected with the human race; and as successive generation is the simplest method by which that object could be attained, therefore, the divine mind established the mode of human existence on earth by succession of generations. Now, giving to this solution all it demands, still it may be asked, why did God determine to create such a multitude of human creatures, unless it were to promote his own glory in their happiness? The ultimate end for the creation of any or all intelligent beings whatever, must be, the promotion of the divine glory in their most perfect enjoyment of Himself forever. This being the *ultimate end* of the creation of such existences, the *mode* of their existence certainly must be selected with direct reference to this end. The reason therefore for the creation of a large multitude of immortal beings of the human race, was, their ultimate happiness in the enjoyment of God. The fact, therefore, that the existence of such creatures is *successive*, clearly

proves, that succession in the generation is intimately connected with the attainment of that final and everlasting happiness. Whilst, then, God has strictly observed *simplicity* in the *production* of all the human race, he has observed the same simplicity in the *mode* by which he designs the *attainment of those ultimate ends* for which they were created.

The question then still recurs, what was the prime object of the successive mode of human existence? To this question we give the following as the appropriate and only satisfactory answer: *that through the process of early education, immortal man might be raised to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven.* Now, besides the proof of this above stated, that God must have selected this as the grand end of man's creation, and consequently have appointed such mode of existence as would conduce to such end; besides this, I say, we see the most abundant evidence of this in the very structure of the family. Here are strength and weakness, experience and inexperience; knowledge and ignorance, associated together. Now why such a combination, unless it be to subserve the purposes of juvenile instruction? Why is the parent strong and knowing, and his child helpless and unknowing, but that the latter might repose upon the strength and be illumined from the intelligence of the former? The very structure of the family then points out juvenile education as its immediate and appropriate object. Nor does it leave us in ignorance as to the character of that education. Being an institution of God, physically and wisely adapted to educational purposes, the character of such education must of course comport with the nature of its author,—that is

it *must be decidedly religious*. However various the objects in themselves to which the young mind is directed, yet the pure features of piety are to characterize the whole. Pure and seraphic religion then, is the great subject matter of juvenile instruction, as is clearly to be seen, in the very physical circumstances of human generation.

2. A second argument to prove that God designs, as the appropriate object of juvenile instruction, his own glory in the salvation of man is, that this end and this alone is suited to the whole character of his administration. The grand object ever before the divine mind in the creation and upholding and management of all things, is invariably the same,—to give such disclosures of himself that not only he himself may be infinitely pleased with his own glorious perfections, but that all his intelligent creatures may also be so enraptured with such displays of divine goodness and glory, as to seek all the enjoyment in their creator, and to ascribe to him all possible praise and worship. This is the grand principle which animates the divine bosom, while it purposes the creation of an angel or a worm, a world or an atom. If then this be the grand object before the divine mind in all his works, we certainly are to expect that he has not forsaken it, in the organization of families with their various relations.

3. Another reason to support the above proposition is, that this is the most important end supposable in the case. That divine wisdom will, under any given circumstances whatever, select the worthiest ends as objects of accomplishment, all will admit who believe in the existence of a God at all. Now, that the salvation of the soul is the most valuable object which it is possible to accomplish in the

early training of the human species, is certain. Of what avail are all the distinctions of state, the honors of philosophy, the pageantry of wealth, and the jollities of mirth, compared with the "pearl of great price?" However, therefore, men may dispute and mistake, as to what ought to be the proper object of early training, divine wisdom speaks but one language on this subject,—it is the language of nature, it is the language of God. This language is, that the salvation of the soul, as it is the worthiest, so it is the only becoming end of the education of an immortal mind.

4. The word of God is also explicit on this subject. Said the God of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. xviii, 19.) How very distinctly do these words declare the divine approbation of strict and pious family government! And how large were the blessings which God thus seemed to couple with the pious regulations of that venerable patriarch's household. In 1 Sam. 3 : 13, 14, we have the displeasure of God very strikingly expressed against the family of Eli for the maladministration of that aged priest in his own house. "For I have told him," saith God, "that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not, and, therefore, I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." Says the wise man, "Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him

with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Prov. 23 : 13, 14. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6 : 4, the Apostle exhorts parents thus, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In fact, the obligation of the fifth commandment, as well as the various other precepts in the Scriptures, inculcating filial duty, seems to be predicated upon the principle, that parents will command their children nothing but what is consistent with the divine law.

It is therefore evident, that the grand object of the divine mind, in the appointment of juvenile instruction is, the glory of his own great name in the salvation of his creatures.

Secondly, God has appointed the means necessary for the securing of this end.

1. The first argument to establish this part of the subject is, that the selection of the end before proved shows clearly, that the proper means have been appointed. God always acts intelligently. He not only chooses the wisest ends, but invariably ordains the most appropriate means for the accomplishment of such ends. To suppose, therefore, that God has appointed as the legitimate object of juvenile education, the salvation of his creature man, and yet, that he has ordained no means for the attainment of such object in such educational course, is to suppose, that God acts in this particular inconsistently with himself, and with all his other operations.

2. The pupil he has furnished for this educational training is not only capable of religion, but has all those flexibilities of temper and heart, necessary to render the

successful inculcation of divine truth easy and pleasant. The child in his very nature is a religious being—is evidently formed for moral government. He has a soul which is not only rational and immortal, but capable of glowing and burning with divine love beside the very archangel himself. Nor is there in the child, either that stubbornness of disposition, or that sturdiness of habit, which we very often meet with in adult years. His mind and heart are like his body, soft and tender. We admit that he is depraved; but then his depravity is but in its incipient state. It has not gathered around it all that moral deformity, and incorrigibleness with which it is often invested in after years. True, this depravity will yield even in infancy and childhood, as in manhood, to nothing short of divine grace. Still, however, as God has invariably connected that grace with the proper use of the means which he has appointed as the channels through which he bestows it; and as the facilities for obtaining in the child an early and proper use of those means are extremely great; so the very pliability of early nature, seems to offer the greatest hope of salvation, as the result of proper and early religious training. Parents often complain of evil tempers, and self-willed inclinations in their children. But, then, those complaints are seldom, if ever, made until both by training and example, they have cherished in their children the very evils of which they complain. They fret and sour the feelings of the young lion and then complain that he growls. “Can one walk on live coals and not be burned?” Nothing is more evident than the fact, that we need a system of infantile education extending much farther back than any which now

obtains amongst us. Infantile metaphysics deserves infinitely more to be made a subject of profound study than it ever has been. Most mothers seem to know infinitely more about the cradle and the nursery, than about the nature and operations of that immortal gem—the soul—which gives their true excellency to each.

3. God has given to the parent all that control over his child and interest in him, which constitutes one of the greatest possible advantages for religious training. Although in some ancient states children were regarded as the property of the government, yet this was not only unjust, but, it was contrary to the most permanent and regular laws of nature herself. For if there be any principle at all which will give the right of property, that principle certainly must exist in the parent's claims to his own offspring. We are not to understand, however, from this, that the right of the parent to his child is the same as his right to any common subject of property. His right, is but the right of affection, of management and training. This right, however, he has both by the decision of nature and the law of God, as well as by the consent of most governments. Along too with this right of control, there are implanted in the very natures of parents and children reciprocal affections, which, as they are the strongest and most agreeable ligaments of families, so they offer the greatest and most delightful facilities for the communication of religious instruction to the young.

4. God has also offered the strongest inducements possible to faithful parental training. He has made it again and again in his Word the subject of express and solemn command. He has represented distinctly, both

in his Word and in his Providence, that the after character and condition of the child, both here and hereafter, depend very much upon early education. He has appointed in the ordinance of infant consecration a covenant, in which he both exacts an oath of fidelity from the parent, and promises his grace and blessing upon such fidelity. He has held out the greatest inducements, in the succors and comforts, which well-raised and pious children bring to their parents in after life; as well as the glory which they will throw around them in the kingdom of Heaven above. And He has also revealed and presented that anguish of spirit, which ensues to parents in this life upon perceiving the profligacy and ruin of badly raised families; as well as that awful gloom which shall forever settle upon such children in the world of woe. Thus has God held out every possible motive to parental faithfulness in the training of their offspring.

5. God has also furnished all necessary means and helps in the conveyance of religious instruction to the minds of children. He has given his holy Sabbath—whose sacred rest, recurring every seventh day, can never fail, when properly observed, to exhibit the most delightful emblem of what, by innocence, man once was, and of what by grace, he may again become. Along with the Sabbath, he has associated his sanctuary and its privileges—where our children, as well as ourselves, may hear the words of salvation. He has given his Holy Word, whose exhibitions of truth and grace, lively descriptions and tender appeals, cannot fail to have the most powerful efficacy in assimilating to itself, all those who read it with docility, and prayer, and constancy. He has given his

ministers, who visit our families, as messengers from the very court of Heaven. In the communion he has lifted up the blood-stained cross, upon which even an infant's eye may look and weep. He has given us the ordinance of Baptism, by which our children are introduced into his church when young, and where they are to be trained up as olive plants in the house of the Lord. He has opened to us the avenues of Sabbath school instruction. And He has multiplied in our families books of the most interesting and religious character.

Thus has Almighty God established in the family the very best school for religious instruction to be found on earth. The church itself, though it covers a larger field and is invested with apparently greater grandeur, and has more numerous ordinances, yet never can be so organic and efficient as the family, considered as a religious school. Her connections are more protracted, her supervision is more general and diffuse, and her weapons are wielded over a greater distance. From her very nature then, the church is less organic and efficient than the family. Hence in those places where the church has allied to her interests the smaller, though more united organizations of family governments, she rises to the very acme of spirituality and usefulness in this world. And on the contrary where family administrations are loose and insubordinate, the church sinks to the very lowest point of spiritual depression. The church contemplated thus in connection with the families of which she is composed, resembles the state of European kingdoms during the existence of baronies. The prince was powerful when supported by his barons, he was nothing without their co-operation.

Just so, now, that church which is made up of families under the best regulations, is the most powerful church. And that which consists of families under loose and irreligious discipline must necessarily be feeble and inefficient. But,

Thirdly, When the means above specified are properly employed by the heads of families, the appropriate results will invariably be attained. Before entering upon the proof of this part of our subject, I wish to expose a *prejudice* connected with it the most unwarrantable and dangerous of almost any ever entertained by man. *This prejudice is, that that religion, which is the result of family education, is to be regarded with suspicion as spurious, since it is more apt to be the result of training or habit than of grace.* That this sentiment is lamentably common among a certain class of persons in our country, and that it has gained great hold on some who ought to be better informed is certain. I call this sentiment a *prejudice*—it is such, since it has its foundation neither in reason nor revelation. All religion is the result of teaching. What is the ministry but a system of instruction? What is the Bible but the volume of God's teachings to man? And what is the great office of the Spirit, but to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?" If, then, all true religion is the result of *teaching*, as sanctified to the heart by the Spirit, are we to discard the effects of that sort of teaching, which, as we have shown, is the most efficient and controlling? Surely, such a sentiment, while it was designed to strike at the very heart of one of the most valuable ordinances of the Gospel, strikes also at the very vitals of religion her-

self. And whose religion, we ask, is to be the most highly appreciated ; the religion of him, who has ever been from early life under the influence of Gospel instruction and discipline ; or of him, who from long habits of ignorance and vice, is apparently but just converted to God ? And which, pray, of the two, is most likely to bring scandal upon the church, the man, whose whole life has been under a sanctifying process ; or the man, whose whole life, with the exception of but a few moments, has been habituated to crime ? The tendency, too, of such a prejudice as this, while it opens to the young all the doors of licentiousness, and offers to parents not a solitary motive for the maintenance of family religion ; perverts the very nature of the religion of Jesus itself. True piety is thus regarded more as the result of animal excitement, of nervous trepidations, of imaginary reveries, and in some cases, even of apparitions and visions, than as the proper effect of truth upon the heart and conscience. Such a prejudice, too, has particularly had a most pernicious tendency upon the numerous slaves of this country. In many sections, to the writer's certain knowledge, there are a great many servants who have not the least confidence in the steady and uniform piety of their owners, since they have been taught to regard that as piety, which is perfectly different in its character.

But I proceed to demonstrate, that where the appropriate means of family instruction are wisely employed, their legitimate ends will ensue. If there be a failure, it must occur either in the parents or instructors of the child, in the means employed, or in God. In the case under consideration, the parents are supposed to be faithful. The fail-

ure, therefore, must either be in the means, or in God who has appointed them.

This failure cannot be in the means. The fact that these means have been selected and appointed by God himself, demonstrably shows that they cannot, if properly employed, be inefficient in any case whatever. For myself, I abhor the sentiment, that God has appointed any system of means that are to constitute but *in the general*, the channels through which grace is to be received, whilst the *particular and proper* use in any case whatever may be attended with defeat. The grand reason why any perish is, because they do not in *point of fact properly* employ the means of salvation put in their hands. If then, God does invariably bestow his grace upon those who, in the *commanded sense*, employ the means put into their hands, and if God has really appointed means for the successful religious training of the young, then certainly, the *commanded use* of those means must be connected with the blessings of his grace. I know, there is a sentiment entertained by many, and akin to the one just now exposed, which is opposed to what is here affirmed. This sentiment is, that you may expect almost any thing as the result of early training but *grace*. It is urged, that you may make children industrious, and intelligent, and even moral, but *pious* you never can render them by any religious training whatever. We do not hold to the sentiment, that *that efficiency* which subdues the heart and converts the soul, is to be found in any means whatever; still, however, we do affirm, that it is invariably connected with the proper use of appointed means. But whence the sentiment above? Does it arise either from any proper views

of natural laws, or from Divine Sovereignty? It cannot arise from the former, for all nature teaches us, that *means are connected with ends*; and though in this case the ends to be accomplished are of grace, yet let it also be remembered, that the means are likewise of grace. The same grace which selected the results, ordained for their accomplishment the appropriate instruments. And why, let it be asked, do we suppose that God acts more variably in the moral than in the natural world? Is not the former of more importance? and are not stability and uniformity there as much required as in the physical world? And upon what does the regularity of natural laws depend, but upon the same thing upon which moral principles operate, *the counsel of the Most High*? The same Being who created the world, has given a promise; and the same hand that, "without variableness or the shadow of a turn," directs the one, manages the other. God in nature, then, can just as soon fail, as God in grace. In fact, the very uniformity with which all nature proceeds, but causes us to believe more firmly, that He who ever acts in consistence with himself, "as He feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies of the field," will ever "give to him that asks, and open to him that knocks." The only reason why men trust God more in nature than in grace is, through their own unfaithfulness and unbelief. As we have often failed in a divine promise, not in God but in *ourselves*, there is a disposition in our hearts to charge upon God instability in the administration of his moral kingdom, which charge too is but poorly atoned for by resolving the whole mystery into divine sovereignty. Thus, he who raises upon us every morning the glorious sun, and sends his showers over our

fields with so grand a regularity, is nevertheless regarded as fickle and uncertain, when besought to lift upon us the Sun of Righteousness, and to shed upon our souls the dews of his grace! Besides, if the sentiment above be true, then as ministers might we expect to inculcate successfully upon our hearers any thing save religion. The truth is, that all such parents as make the above declaration, teach their children any thing but religion. They school their minds most carefully, and clothe and feed their bodies most tenderly, and then wonder that their neglected souls are not converted!

Nor can there be a failure in God in the proper educational course of a child. The above remarks will prove, we hope, that if God has given the promise of his grace in the training of the young, that that promise cannot possibly fail. Has then God given assurance of his blessing in the religious training of children? To this we answer in the affirmative.

First. Because the family is an institution peculiarly of his own creation, and an institution, too, which has, as has been shown, the religious training of the young in order to salvation, as its peculiar design. Now, nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that God, after he had appointed family religion as a grand means of salvation, should withhold his grace from such institution. This would be setting the providence of God directly against his purpose. The very structure, therefore, of the family, demonstrates that God designs to bestow his grace in its proper administration.

Secondly. The fact that parents are commanded to "train up their children in his nurture and admonition,"

proves that they have his promise of assistance in the discharge of that duty. It is a feature in all the commands of God to man, that they carry along with them a promise of divine aid to all who will comply with them. This assistance is proffered in reference both to the performance of duty, and to its results. When, therefore, God commands parents to bring up their offspring for his service and glory, he pledges to them in the very command, both grace to perform the duty on their part, and grace to the children whom they thus strive to educate in his fear.

Thirdly. But God not only gives this assurance indirectly and by implication,—he positively offers to enter into covenant with parents in behalf of their children, and thus to crown their efforts with certain and abundant success. The mode in which he extended his mercy to Abraham, is precisely the mode in which he offers it to his believing saints at present. He promises to be a God to every believer and also to his seed. While faith is the principle and the only principle which introduces into his kingdom, yet that faith respects now, as it did in Abraham and all the ancient church, not only the head of a family, but its subordinate members. Now, in embracing this covenant of God for our children, we have the oath of God himself, that his grace shall not fail our offspring. Thus shall be fulfilled abundantly upon us the declaration of the prophet, “I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.” Is. 44: 3.

If, therefore, the results of religious training be not attained, it can arise from no deficiency either in the means appointed or in God who has appointed them. Fidelity, therefore, in the parent necessarily supposes the

accomplishment of the grand and divine object of juvenile instruction—viz. *the salvation of the soul*.

Before leaving this lecture, I can but remark, how deeply stained will the skirts of many parents be found hereafter with the blood of their own offspring! Oh, what wailing and lamentation will there be at the judgment-seat, when thoughtless and wicked parents shall meet those children, whom they have murdered through neglect and carelessness! And, the children of how many of those, who here call themselves Christians, will point to their own parents as the instruments and means of their unutterable anguish! And, how many a poor unfortunate child, too, will there lift up its eyes in despair, through the abuses and misrepresentations thrown around the ordinance of infant baptism. Not that this ordinance itself in its form alone is essential to salvation; but, that lying as it does at the very foundation of family government and religious education, its denial and abuses, will and must introduce into families such a state of things as will invariably lead to the loss of more or less immortal souls! Oh, that I could reach the hearts of Christian brethren of all denominations on this subject; not as a sectary, but as a friend to themselves and their families, as well as to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Far below the range of prejudice and error, in those deep regions of the soul, where the pure love of truth and holiness dwell—*there—there* would I try to enkindle a becoming interest for an institution, as glorious in the sight of God, as it is in its very nature, conducive to human salvation.

LECTURE V.

SEVERAL INTRODUCTORY TOPICS DISCUSSED

THE object of the following lecture, is to insist upon several considerations in support of Pædobaptism, and as introductory to that more connected chain of argument by which it is designed to advocate and defend this ordinance.

1. The first remark which I here make is, that children evidently have a right to membership in the church of Jesus Christ, in view of that obligation which rests upon *all men* to accept that covenant of mercy, into which the great God is pleased to enter with us as sinners, in the name of a Redeemer. That there was such a covenant entered into between the Father and Son, in order to save our guilty race, is not only certain from many express texts of Scripture, (see Gen. 3: 15. Ps. 2: also 110. Isaiah 53: 10—12. Zech. 13: 7. John 10: 18.) but from the whole of God's providential dealings with man in this world. The existence of such covenant constitutes the *great basis* upon which the whole church, with all its ordinances and blessings, stands. Now, the very existence and proclamation of such a covenant devolves, upon the whole human

race, the very strongest obligation to accept its proffered provisions. Not to accept these, would be but to laugh at the wisdom, and trample upon the goodness, of the ever-blessed Trinity. It would be, to set at defiance the authority of God, and to involve the soul in the most awful guilt. The duty, then, to accept at once such offered grace, rests with binding force upon all mankind. Nor can there possibly be salvation but through this medium. All who are delivered, are delivered through the express provisions of this covenant. But, from that peculiar mode of existence which divine wisdom has assigned to man, some of those, to whom the offers of mercy through such covenant are necessary, cannot accept them, since they cannot even understand them. Yet even these are to be saved through this medium alone. *They must be connected with that covenant or be lost.* But, how is it possible for them to be connected in any ordinary way with such covenant, but *through their parents*; who, as they are their natural guardians and agents in every thing else, must be also in this. Is it more likely that God, who always acts wisely and with special design to the promotion of piety among his creatures, should make the mode of connection between children and this covenant arbitrary, unrevealed, and no way conducive to piety on earth; or, that he should establish such mode of connection through their parents, as the most natural and the wisest? Between these alternatives, there surely never could be, in the mind of an infinitely intelligent Being, a moment's hesitation. When God purposed the salvation of men through a Redeemer, did he effect the atonement of human guilt in some remote part of his kingdom, or on earth? And why on earth but to

secure the very ends of that atonement by the exhibition of his son upon the cross *in sight of men*? Does God then design the salvation of children? What medium of effecting this purpose is so natural, and so conducive to the prevalence of piety on earth, as its accomplishment immediately through their parents? And if this be so, how natural is it that God, who gives a seal to *parents* to signify *their* connection with that chain of everlasting love which has been let down into this world through the cross, should also extend the same seal to their *infant seed*, as significant of *their* connection also with the same thing.

But some may say, why extend such seal to children, seeing they cannot understand it? But to such let it be replied, that the very fact that they can understand, neither the seal nor the salvation offered, is the very reason why it should be extended to them. Surely, none will say, that salvation should not be extended to them, simply upon the ground that they cannot appreciate its nature or value. If, then, it be important that mercy, through a Saviour, should be extended even to infants, is it not of infinite importance, both to the church and to parents, that God should give sufficient evidence of this fact. And what greater evidence could be given, than the willingness of the Most High to enter into a covenant of mercy through their parents, with even little children? In order to put this matter clearly before the mind,—suppose that all men, without exception, had accepted the salvation offered; would parents in this case have accepted it for themselves alone, or for their children also? Most certainly, in this state of things, the act of the parent would have reached to the child; and though incapable of moral action, yet

would the child have been contemplated by the divine mind, through his parent, as the heir of his mercy. Again, suppose all men had rejected that salvation: is it likely that divine mercy, foreseeing the *future and certain personal and actual* rebellion of the child himself, would have overleaped the wickedness and unbelief of the parent to pluck his offspring from hell? What is the difference then, whilst a part accept and a part refuse such mercy? Why in this case alone, should all children occupy a *great common ground*, while their parents stand in as different aspects to God's covenant, as darkness from light?

But take another illustration. Here is an island visited by some tremendous plague. Sickness and death reign among all its inhabitants. But just in this state of things, a great and well furnished ship is sent to their rescue. The offer is extended to all, to come on board and be saved. But, a large number of the inhabitants of this island are children. These, it is evident, can neither understand the offers made, or their danger; nor can they accept the assistance proffered. What then is to be done? Is the offer made to them? Most certainly, since it is made to all. But how is it made to them? Certainly *through their parents*. And how is it expected for them to accept it? Certainly *through their parents*. Now, what would be thought of parents in such a case, who should reason as many do now adays as to the ordinance under discussion? Who should say, when such offers of mercy were made, "our children are small; they cannot understand the need of such aid; they are incapable of accepting such safety,—nor is there any need that they should, seeing they are but children. Innocent things,

they are in no danger!" But see others of a different understanding betake themselves and all their families into the vessel. See them bear all their helpless babes on board; and see the great ship hoist her sails and take her flight! How wretched the condition of all left, whether parents or children! How inexpressibly happy the state of those who, understanding the proclamation of assistance *precisely as it was intended*, had gone with *all their households* on board! The very fact, therefore, that God, in the creation of man, brings him into being in an infantile state, and the fact that salvation through the cross is offered to all men, as well as the fact that *all, infants not excepted*, stand in perishing need of that salvation, demonstrably shows that it is offered, not alone to individuals as such, but to *the families of men* that constitute the whole human race. In this view of the subject it is, that the Scriptures declare that "the generation of the upright shall be blessed;" that his children shall grow up "like olive plants around his table," and that they seldom or never "beg bread." While on the contrary the prophet prays that God would "pour out his fury upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon his name." The same sentiment is expressed in the second commandment of the Decalogue, where the Lord declares himself to be "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments."

2. A second remark I offer in support of Pædobaptism is, that according to the common sentiment of mankind, children are always born to the circumstances and condi-

tion of their parents. By circumstances and condition here, we mean all those peculiarities of property, honor, morality, religion, learning, politics, &c., which constitute the external state of men, and which breed the various classifications that exist in the world. Society in every country, as well as in Asia, has its *caste*; and although this *caste* in our country may not be regarded with such scrupulosity as in India, yet does it as really exist. Our remark above, therefore is, that all children born within the prescribed limits of any of the several classifications of society do, whilst under age particularly, belong to the peculiar class in which they were born. The children of European parents are recognized as Europeans; the children of Americans as Americans. The children of the free are free born; the children of slaves are recognized as slaves. The children of the rich are born to wealth; the descendants of the poor to poverty. The children of Heathen or Jewish parents are born to the religion of their ancestors; those of Christians inherit, at least externally, Christianity as their patrimony. Now it is not said, that children born in any one form of society, may not pass over afterwards to another. Those governments that hold this sentiment, are justly enough regarded as more or less tyrannical. But the farthest that either law or public sentiment can properly go, in assimilating these classes, is to permit and promote transitions from one to the other. The distinctions themselves must forever exist. Now, if in all such cases, children are born to the condition of their parents, shall we be regarded as irrational, because we insist upon it, that the same is true in another and a far more important division of mankind? When we claim

the right of the children of believers to membership in that kingdom of faith which Christ has set up on earth, in virtue of the piety of their parents; and when we exclude from such membership the offspring of the ungodly, simply on *the ground of unbelief in their parents*,—are we doing any thing else than what all men are perpetually doing every day? When we claim the advantages of a parent's fortune for his child, are we doing well? but, when we claim also the advantages of his piety, are we doing ill? Will men admit the propriety of a principle in every thing else, save where its application is of most value? Surely reason never can assent to such a deviation from a principle so deeply founded in our nature, and whose exercise is not only natural, but greatly beneficial, when not abused. We insist upon it, therefore, that co-membership with his pious parent in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is the privilege of the child of such parent; and that he who would deprive him of it, as he takes away that which profits him nothing, so he destroys the legacy of an immortal soul, for which nothing can compensate. He who divests the poor orphan of the small estate purchased by parental toil, and imbued with parental tears, commits an offence for which posterity will execrate his memory. But he who divests an infant immortal of a possession purchased by the blood and groans of his Saviour, and left him as an evidence of his Redeemer's kindness, filches from him treasures compared with which estates are trash. Surely men forget the sanctity of the ground upon which they tread. We are, here, not trampling upon worms, whose memory shall perish with them, but upon souls, which if lost through our error, will rise in the judgment against us.

But one grand reason why men are so loth to grant to believers their peculiar privileges in this respect is, that they see not properly the difference between religion and irreligion, and consequently do not justly enough appreciate the distinction between a believing and an unbelieving family. But surely nothing can be more in contrast than holiness and unholiness, faith and infidelity; and nothing more different than the family of a pious man and that of a wicked one. In the one is erected the family altar where burns the morning and evening sacrifice. The word of God there unfolds daily to the minds of all, its treasures both of wisdom and of grace. Holiness to God is written on every article of furniture and dress, as well as on the forehead of each inmate of the house. God's covenant of peace embraces the whole happy circle. Angels visit there on errands of mercy and kindness. The blood of the all-atoning sacrifice has been sprinkled upon the posts of the door. And the flag of redeeming love ever floats over the abode where the good man dwells. Not so with the household of the sinner. Here the head of the family is an enemy of God—no altar is reared—no victim burns. There is no just recognition of divine authority in any of the family concerns—no proper veneration of the Sabbath or sanctuary—no prayer, no praise. No blood of salvation stains the lintel of the door, while the flag of rebellion, proudly contemptuous of divine grace, is wantonly unfurled to the breezes of heaven. Who does not see, that under such circumstances, as the heads of the family themselves sustain an opposite relation to God; as their whole families must be contemplated differently by him who “tries the reins and the hearts,” so the

children of each must stand in an opposite and vastly different relation to God and his covenant. Who does not see the propriety of admitting to membership in the church the one set, and of excluding the other?

The above representation is perfectly sustained throughout the Scriptures. In the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel where the Saviour depicts the scene of a future judgment, he represents the Judge as separating the vast company then before him, "as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." "And he shall set," says he, "the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left." Here the pious are called sheep and the wicked goats. The same comparison is held out in John 10: 16; where the union between the Jewish and Gentile church is exhibited under the figure of collecting scattered and wandering sheep into their proper fold. "And other sheep I have," says the Saviour, "which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." The two large classes of men, believers and unbelievers, then, are exhibited in the Word of God, as standing in such contrast to each other, as sheep do to goats. Now, have we in this comparison any thing that will lead us to conclude that the children of the one sustain a different relation to God, from that sustained by the children of the other?—In Isaiah 40: 11, speaking of Christ, the prophet says, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom." This prophecy seems to have had its fulfillment when Christ received little children and said to his disciples, "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the

kingdom of Heaven," Matt. 19: 14. And also when in addressing Peter, in John 21: 15, he says to him, "Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me more than these?" Peter saith unto him, "yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Then Christ charges him, as an evidence of his love, to "feed his lambs." In the two other instances associated with this, he charges Peter to "feed his sheep." Now, taking all this together into view, it seems evident, that the Scriptures definitely teach, that not only the sheep are to be folded and fed, but that the lambs likewise are to receive the same attention. This fold is the church—his sheep are believers, both Jews and Gentiles—and his lambs are the children of believers. As, therefore, believers are to be received into membership in Christ's church, so are their children likewise: and they who would keep them out, act not like that great but tender Shepherd, who took them in his arms, and who said, "suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and who almost with his last words charged the chiefest of the twelve Apostles, to "feed his lambs."

3. Another remark I here make is, that the fact that God enters into covenant with children, through their parents, is the most conclusive evidence of infant salvation with which God has furnished us. It is with some reluctance that I enter upon this subject, both from its extreme delicacy, as well as from that kind of nervous sensibility which many exhibit whenever such a subject is broached. With mere prejudice and sensibility on this subject, however, I have nothing to do but to attempt their removal. God does not commission his servants to *please men*, but to *save them*. Let it, however, be distinctly remembered that

it is not my object to prove the destruction of children—I am only trying to put their salvation on the surest footing possible.

From whatever causes it may arise, yet is it true that the belief in the salvation of persons dying in infancy is almost as prevalent as the belief of Christianity itself. Against the belief we have nothing to complain—our objections are directed against the grounds upon which it is held. As it now exists it is rather a matter of prejudice than of correct faith. The grounds upon which this sentiment is generally advocated are these—

First, The absolute innocence of the child. Of course if this can be proved, all dying while thus *absolutely innocent*, are necessarily saved, without even any thanks to divine grace. They go to heaven *by right*, and not through the free mercy of God. But we apprehend the proof of such absolute innocence on the part of man when first born, never can be adduced either from revelation, reason, or from fact.

Revelation furnishes no proof of such state of innocence in man. “In the day thou eatest thereof,” said God to Adam before the fall, “thou shalt die.” Now whatever glosses may be thrown over this threatening of the Divine Law, two things are evident, viz. that all Adam’s posterity without an exception were involved in it; and that in consequence of their being involved in it, human nature has in no stage of its existence, save by divine grace, possessed that *moral excellence, divine image, supernatural influence*, or whatever else it may be called, which our great Progenitors by transgression lost. This divine excellence was then forever lost from the whole

human race, save as it might be restored by Christ—and, whoever advocates a doctrine different from this, can believe neither in the *totality* of the fall, nor in the *completeness* of mediatorial restoration.

Nor is infantile sanctity capable of proof from fact. On this point all are agreed, that as far back as we can trace moral action, it is stained with corruption. Beyond, then, the ultimate research of our minds on the subject, there must exist in man a *spring of corruption*, or an *adaptedness to sin*, or a *liability to moral contagion*, or, call it what we may, *something*, which as it is the source of after transgression and guilt, so it can but be displeasing in the sight of God.

Nor can the innocence of the infant be substantiated by reason. All reason attests, that springing from degenerate parents, a child can never be clean. Besides, if clean and dying while such, all reason equally declares, that, as it needs no washing in a Saviour's blood, so it never can handle the harp of redeeming love. But all, we are informed in the Apocalypse, who stood around the throne from this world, had "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Hence, according to this opinion, there is a road to Heaven from this world, as unrevealed, as it is irrational and remote from a Saviour's cross.

Whoever, therefore, advocates the salvation of infants, upon their *innocence*, certainly predicates such salvation upon *very precarious ground*.

Secondly. A second ground upon which infant salvation is maintained, is the *non-actuality* of their guilt. Persons of this class believe in the depravity of human na-

ture, but yet suppose that that depravity, when not *actually* expressed, does not subject to punishment. Now, such persons either must believe in the necessity of infantile regeneration in order to admittance into eternal life, or they do not. If they do, then they admit a reason of final condemnation to exist in the child, which needs to be removed by divine grace before it can be saved: or if they do not, then they must believe there is a passage to Heaven from this world, other than by the cross of Christ.

There are many who seem to hold a modification of the above sentiment. They believe both in the criminal depravity of human nature, and also in the absolute necessity of regenerating grace in order to salvation; yet seem to suppose, that the regeneration of an infant, dying while such, is a matter not of gratuity but of debt,—that the divine nature is such, that God cannot, consistently with himself, send a *depraved soul* to hell, when such soul has not *actually* showed the malignity of its nature against him. This sentiment, in the first place, is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, which makes salvation in every case a matter of infinitely free and sovereign grace. If the child has in him a *criminal cause* of condemnation, certainly the removal of that evil must be through *infinite mercy* alone. Besides, the very circumstances of the child declare it to be worthy of punishment. It is born depraved—in a wicked world—surrounded by temptation—with a weak and mortal body, subject to the acutest pains, and to death itself. Now, certainly it could not well be punished at so early an age, and in a probationary state, *more than it is punished, in point of fact*. If then the child be *justly* subject to these afflictions, where is the man who

has boldness enough to look so far into divine counsel, as to declare his final condemnation unjust ?

Thirdly. Another principle upon which infant salvation is argued is, several intimations of it that are given in the holy Scriptures. Some of the more prominent of these we shall now notice. The first is found in 2 Sam. 12: 23, where David remarks after the death of his first child by Bathsheba, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Now, all that this would seem to mean is, that David by death would be introduced into that eternal world into which the soul of his child had gone. Probably even *less* than this was meant ; viz. that though it was certain that he himself should ultimately die, yet there was no hope at all that the child should again be restored to life. But, even supposing that this passage really does mean, that David should meet his child in Heaven, yet let it be remembered that that child was an Israelite, and *within the covenant of God*. Another passage is to be found in Luke 18: 16, as well as in the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark. Here the Saviour expresses himself thus, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." There are at least three constructions put upon this passage. Some suppose, (and they are generally those who deny infant baptism,) that the Saviour designed to say, "of adults of a child-like temper is the kingdom of God." This certainly, according to this interpretation, has nothing to do with infant salvation. My own opinion, as well as that of Pædobaptists generally is, that he meant to say, that that church which he was about to set up on earth, which was his kingdom, would admit children into its membership.

This will be considered elsewhere. The other interpretation, and that which supports infant salvation from it, is, that the Saviour designed to say, that children indiscriminately are the heirs of eternal life. Without contending *here* for what is the proper meaning of this text, I would only say, that that passage which admits of three interpretations, only one of which supporting infant salvation, certainly cannot establish that point satisfactorily. Another set of passages in support of this doctrine, are adduced from the 18th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, where the Saviour is said to place a child in the midst of his disciples and say, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Again, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." And again, "Even so it is not the will of your Father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." To a careless reader, these texts might appear very conclusive; but, on closely examining the passage, it evidently has no connection whatever with the salvation of children. First, the *object* of these passages shows that they have no such meaning. The disciples had been disputing by the way, who should be greatest in that kingdom which their Mas-

ter was about to set up in the world. The Saviour seemed not to notice them at first ; but when they had come to the house, he took a little child and set him before them, as an example of humility. He then declares to them, that instead of disputing about dignities in his kingdom, they should see to it, that they entered it, which they could not do but with the spirit and humility of a child. He then goes on to describe a proper citizen of his kingdom. What, therefore, he here says, was applied not to the little child himself, but to the disciple who had the humility of that child. It was in this way, viz. by example, that the Saviour was in the habit of instructing both his disciples and the multitude. Again, the words themselves show, that what is here said was not designed to be understood of little children, but of real though humble believers. In verses 12, 13, the little one here described is represented to have gone astray ; and in the 6th verse he is said to be a believer. In the 5th, too, he is said to be capable of being received in the name of the Lord. Now certainly no one will suppose that these descriptions refer to an infant child. And, thirdly, what is here said of this “little one,” is repeatedly said of believers in the Scriptures. Thus in Matt. 10: 40, the Saviour says in reference to his disciples, “He that receiveth you receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” In Matt. 5: 19, the Saviour says, “But, whosoever shall do and teach” these commandments, “the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” In Heb. 1: 14, Paul asks the following question as to the angels,—by which question, too, he evidently intended a very strong affirmation,—“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" In John 10: 27, 28, Christ declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." It is but reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that what is generally said of believers throughout the New Testament, is to be understood in reference to them here.

If any shall ask, why I apply what is here said to the believer, but what is said in the 18th of Luke to the child, my answer is, that I could not do otherwise; since in the former case, Christ was speaking of a *disciple*, in the latter case, of a *child*.

But let us now look at the *certain assurance* which the covenant of infant consecration gives to a believing parent, of the salvation of his child, dying whilst an infant. Nor are we about to establish the position, that the mere rite of infant baptism, apart from that grace which is connected with it, is essential to salvation. Probably many parents so misunderstand this ordinance, and so abuse it, as to render it rather a curse than a blessing. But contemplate the ordinance itself as a divine institution, and see what glorious blessings are connected with it.

The confidence alluded to above is based, first, on the *espousal* which, in its proper performance, God, as a covenant-keeping God, makes of the child of the believer. The very object for which God extends this covenant to children is, to espouse them as his own. They become, in a very high and peculiar sense, the Lord's property. Thus the descendants of believing Abraham, became peculiarly the inheritance of the great Jehovah. A child

thus dedicated to God by a parent's active faith, becomes as truly God's, as the adult does who dedicates himself. Now, if God has thus stooped down to infancy, and espouses our little children to himself, where can there exist the least doubt as to the salvation of such children?

Again, this confidence of the salvation of such child is based upon the *express promise* of God himself. In Gen. 17, where we have the whole covenant of Pædomembership detailed, and in verses 7, 8, 9, God declares, that he will be a God, not only to the believer himself, but to his seed or children also: and, that this covenant was designed to extend to the youngest of his children, we have the clearest evidence, because its seal was to be applied to them as early as eight days old. In favor, therefore, of the salvation of the infants of God's own people, who dedicate to their Father in heaven the offspring he has given them, we have both the *covenant* and the *oath* of God. That these are sufficient to inspire the utmost confidence, none can deny.

Now, if after what has been said, there are those who still believe that all children stand on a footing equally sure of eternal life; who believe that the Scriptures are sufficiently clear on this subject, apart from the covenant of Pædomembership; and who are willing to hold to such evidence, as sufficiently complete; if there be those, I say, who are willing to rest on a weaker basis, in so important a case, where a stronger one is evidently offered, all that I can say is, I feel tenderly for them, though I cannot and will not complain. I would only urge them to pay the subject a little more attention. In coming to a conclusion, therefore, on this point, I would finally observe that, al-

though it is not to be denied but that both from Scripture and from the nature of God, there may be evidence enough of the salvation of any child whatever, dying whilst such, to give to us both comfort and hope, yet, that the ordinance of Pædomembership does certainly give the most satisfactory evidence on that subject which is furnished us in the word of God. Nor can we conceive it possible, for any one to have any adequate idea of the nature and advantages of this ordinance, who does not hold this sentiment. They who abjure this institution, may place all children upon the same footing, but they who advocate it, must perceive a difference in the moral relations which baptized and unbaptized children sustain to God.

IV. A fourth observation we here make is, that since out of two forms in which the church has already existed, children were admitted as members; and since in that form in which it will hereafter exist they must, from the very nature of the case, be constituted such, it is but rational to suppose, that they are admissible to the same privileges in that one which now exists. The four forms alluded to above are, the *patriarchal*, the *national*, the *gospel*, and the *millenial*.

First. Children were admitted to membership in the patriarchal form of church government. That they were admitted to membership in the church in Abraham's family, as well as in the family of his successors to the days of Moses, all will admit. But they were members of the patriarchal church even before this. True, the express words of the covenant were not revealed, nor its seal given; still, however, the covenant existed in *its principle and in point of fact*. The moral law existed before given to Moses in form

on Mount Sinai ; the atonement *virtually* existed before the death of Christ on the cross. And so with the covenant of membership in the church. The church was first constituted in the family of Adam ; afterwards it descended through a long line of patriarchs, down to the days of Abraham. In this patriarchal church, the father was the priest or minister, and his family constituted the members. Each child, therefore, born in a patriarchal family, was born in the patriarchal church, and therefore entitled to membership by birth.

Secondly. Children were admitted to membership in the *national* form of church government. The Jewish polity was both ecclesiastical and national. The nationality of their polity was but erected as a defence around its ecclesiastical institutions. In those days of *obscure vision* and *many wars*, as well as of almost *universal idolatry*, the pure religion could not have been maintained but by strong national defence. On this account, God left not his church to contend unequally with surrounding superstition ; but selected a *particular nation*,—located them in a select and almost impregnable section of country,—gave them not only moral but *martial* laws,—and constituted amongst them the abode of his Holy Zion. All this nation were members of his church ; and his covenant of mercy extended to *children* as well as to adults.

Thirdly. In the millennial form of church government, children will be recognized as members. Precisely what will be the state of things in the millenium, we cannot tell ; but, that the earth shall be full of the knowledge and glory of God, is evident from Scripture. Children, therefore, in that period, will either be regenerated immediately when

born, or not long thereafter. If this be so, of course they will be universally received into membership in the millennial church. Nor by their own act. The certainty of their conversion being universally established, there can exist then no objection to their baptism upon the faith of their parents. In fact, all, then, will be born within the church, and entitled to her privileges.

Fourthly. Now, reasoning from analogy,—from consistency in the divine government,—we must admit that the children of believing parents are now born in the gospel church, and are entitled to its blessings. If they have been members in the patriarchal, the national, and if they will be in the millennial, who dares exclude them from the gospel church at present? What are we “that we should withstand God?”

A fifth and final remark I have here to make is, that as entrance upon the intimate educational course of an immortal soul, is a work of no ordinary solemnity, it is but proper that God should exact an oath of fidelity from every one who enters upon such work. When men now-a-days enter upon any very solemn and important trust, they are required to take an oath of office. Thus kings, and presidents, and governors, and legislators, and all civil magistrates, take an oath. Oaths are also administered to those who hold high educational departments. Thus the presidents of colleges, generally, and the rectors of some schools, are required to enter into a solemn covenant of fidelity. No minister or officer in the church, too, is ordained without binding himself by a solemn covenant. Marriages involve the same principle. The same was true with ancient Israel. Not only had they a covenant imposed upon

them as a nation, and as individuals, but as officers, both in the state and church. When, too, a solitary person makes a profession of religion, God imposes upon him covenanting vows. If, then, the parental office be one of equal solemnity and importance to any named above, we certainly may expect, that that God who has constituted such office, and who sees its supreme importance, would not leave it unguarded by a solemn oath of fidelity on the part of the parent. To suppose so, is either to undervalue the importance of the office, or to impeach the wisdom of God. Certainly, each stands upon a basis too strong for successful assault. He, therefore, who either refuses himself to take such oath, or who urges others to refuse, thrusts into one of the most solemn offices of the great God, an unsworn, and therefore, in all probability, a faithless incumbent.

LECTURE VI.

THE DIVINE CONDUCT TOWARDS CHILDREN DETERMINED
IN A HIGH DEGREE BY THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT
OF THE PARENTS.

It is the design of the following Lecture, to establish the proposition, that *the dealings of God with children, are in a very high degree determined by the character and conduct of their parents, and the relation such parents bear to Him*. In doing so, I shall *first* advance a few reasons why this is the case, and then shall attempt to establish the fact by testimony, both from Revelation and Divine Providence.

First. I am to give a few reasons why the divine conduct towards children is in a *great measure* determined by that of the parents, as well as the relation such parents sustain to God.

1. The first reason which I advance in explanation of the Divine conduct in this particular, is derived from that *scheme of mediation* which characterizes the whole physical and moral world. The universe, of which we constitute a part, is not made up of a vast number of disconnected existences. Connection and harmony are stamped

upon all the works of God. Each particular being enjoys not an entirely separate and distinct existence, but an existence *intimately*, and in many cases *essentially* connected with others. This being the plan of created existence, while each being in its *proper state and sphere* conduces to the happiness of the rest, every one *out of its proper sphere, and changing its proper character*, becomes a source of disturbance to those with which it is thus connected. This is true with regard to that grand system of worlds which God has created and established. Amidst the vast number of sparkling luminaries above and around us, we are apt to conclude, that were our small globe stricken from the list of worlds, it would never be missed. But the probability is, that the destruction of one solitary globe, might, in the course of time, according to the present order of things, be connected with the dissolution of the whole universe of nature. Such, no doubt, is the relation of the celestial bodies, that not one can go astray without spreading confusion among the rest. The above principle is also true in relation to the several parts of which our globe is composed. In order to the safe preservation of our earth, there are ten thousand different, yet connected things, which must exist and operate in the exactest order and proportions. Amidst the apparent confusion and irregularity around us, we are apt to conceive, that, with a few more obvious exceptions, the affairs of our earth are carried on much at random. But, so far from this being the case, a very slight deviation from those exact laws, according to which our world is managed, would either destroy its existence, or render it unfit to be the abode of its present inhabitants. Thus philosophers conclude that from its ear-

liest existence, and amidst all the changes to which our globe is subject, yet not a particle of matter has been annihilated. The loss even of an atom so small, might be attended ultimately with dangerous consequences. We see the above truth also illustrated in those immediate elements around us, air, earth, heat, water. An improper preponderance of any one of the above elements, would inevitably be attended with greater or less danger to our lives. In such a case, we would either be drowned with a flood, consumed by fire, destroyed by thirst, or suffocated by an irrespirable atmosphere. What fatal consequences often result to men from a little protraction of heat, or the stagnation of an adjacent pond? What dreadful diseases often have their birth in causes so apparently small and insignificant? We see this principle also illustrated in the political and social world. A disorderly part of a great empire throws the whole into confusion—the ill-conduct of a solitary man, alarms and excites the nation. In a neighborhood or town one disorderly and mischievous family afflicts the whole social fraternity. In the religious world one man often causes thousands to stumble, thus fulfilling the Scripture where it declares “one sinner destroys much good.”

The empire of the great God, therefore, both natural and moral, is so constructed, that any irregularity, ill-conduct, or misfortune in any one part of it, will, in every case, more or less affect the rest. It is not a vast collection of disconnected materials, but the union of an infinite number of parts, all constituting one grand and beautiful whole. It thus resembles the links of a great chain, each connected with the rest and conducing to the preservation

of the whole ; or the several pieces which compose a large and important machine—where the destruction and irregularity of a *part* would prevent the proper movements and results of the entire machine itself.

We are to observe, too, in this construction of the universe, that the parts immediately adjacent to the disorderly member, are always the first and generally the greatest sufferers. Thus, when a house takes fire in a city, those immediately in the neighborhood are likely to sustain the earliest and the greatest injury. Thus, too, when a plague breaks out among a people, those in immediate proximity to it are most in danger. This is but in consistence with the grand and general law itself. As such evils always spread through the connection existing between the one in which it exists, and those with which it is associated, so, of course, those nearest such evils must be the first sufferers ; and must constitute the medium through which such evils are transmitted to others.

That the parent, therefore, should be constituted both physically and morally the mediator between his child and God, is perfectly consistent with the great plan, according to which the whole universe is governed.

2. Another reason which may be assigned as explanatory of the divine conduct in this respect, is drawn from the very great probability, that the character of the parent will, in the regular order of things, be that of his child.

The chief objection against the doctrine now under discussion is, that it is unjust for God to punish a child for the sin of his parent. Such an inference, however, as this can by no means be drawn from the principle we are attempting to illustrate. God does in no case devolve the

immediate guilt of a progenitor upon his offspring, and yet, probably in every case, the *effects* of such guilt do fall upon such offspring in a greater or less degree. Sin can under no circumstances transmit *itself*, yet is it its very nature always to beget its *like*. The man who murders his fellow man, transfers not the crime of murder to the victim of his hate, though its results have probably been instrumental in sinking his soul to hell. The one is worthy of perdition, for his crime; the other is, in point of fact, weltering amidst its flames through the consequences of that crime. Just so, the polluted nature of a father begets a polluted child—the ungodly conduct of that father still more deeply stains the nature of that child:—thus, the connection between the parent and such child, though it did not transfer the parent's guilt to his offspring; yet it brought down upon him the most dreadful results; instrumentally involving him in crime, and preparing him for woe. And such we assert to be the fact in the case of every sinful and unbelieving parent, unless such evils are prevented by interposing grace.

First. The nature of the child is derived *instrumentally* from the parent. As to the precise mode according to which the body and the soul of the infant is produced, I say nothing,—but that man is instrumentally the author of the existence of his *like-man*—is too obvious to be denied. The nature, therefore, of the child is derived from his parent; and so much is this so, that children often bear the strongest possible resemblance to their progenitors both in body and in mind. The peculiar features of the body, as well as the peculiar properties of the soul, seem in their formation to have respected those of the parents as

their model. Now, if the parents themselves be corrupt, if their natures be impure, their children will also be distinguished with the same natural corruption.

Secondly. The fostering *circumstances* of the child are determined in a great degree by the parent. Along with his existence, the child derives from his parents, all those associations and influences which go to constitute his character. Country, associates, instructors, customs, manners, language, sentiments, and every thing around him, are brought into contact with him through his parents. The immediate circumstances of *home* are in a still higher sense determined by his parents. Family discipline, domestic economy, the character of servants, and of visitors and inmates generally, are all the result, in a great measure, of parental choice.

Now, as the child derives, *instrumentally*, his particular nature from his parents; and as he also obtains through them all those circumstances which go to develop that nature and form its character; it is perfectly evident, that the character of the parent will become in a very high degree the character of his child. That God, therefore, should treat the child of the sinner, whom he sees growing up into the very image of parental impiety, in one way; and that he should treat the offspring of the believer, whom he likewise sees growing up into the religious character of his parents in another way, is both right and wise.

3. A third reason, which may be given, why God should make a difference in his conduct towards the offspring of the pious and of the wicked is, that such difference tends greatly to the promotion of piety amongst men.

That God will, under all circumstances, select those

methods of administering his government which have the greatest tendency to promote its great end—the advancement of his glory among his creatures—none will doubt, who have any correct ideas of the character of the Supreme Being. Now, that the directing of the divine conduct towards children, in a great measure, by that of their parents towards him, has a very powerful influence in the spread of piety, is certain, from the three following considerations.

First. It gives a most striking exhibition of the evil of sin in the view of God.—Probably there is no delusion more common and more fatal than that which conceives sin to be a trifle. It is exceedingly difficult so to spread its enormity before the mind as to produce a proper conviction of its turpitude. Men will overlook and forget it; and they will conceive that God regards it as they do. Now, that as long as such a delusion prevails, “iniquity will abound,” is most evident. Those passions and propensities, the indulgence of which men love, and the evil of which indulgence they do not properly see, will under these circumstances bid defiance to all restraint. Virtue would be sacrificed; sin would triumph, and the world deluged in woe. In order, therefore, to prevent the existence of such awful evils, God frequently gives to men, even in this world, such evidences of his hatred to sin and of his determination to punish it, as destroys the fallacies of unbelief and fills them with awful apprehensions. If, then, it be true, that the sins of parents often involve their children in the same calamities with themselves, how natural must be the conclusion, that sin is an awful evil, and that they who trifle with it, must expect to be undone? Whilst men thus perceive not only the sinner himself

perishing for his guilt, but the destruction of others too, hastened by the same guilt, how must their fears be excited in view of so tremendous an evil? In order, therefore, to prevent the greater prevalence of sin and ruin amongst men, it is proper, that God should, in his overruling providence, devolve the *effects and consequences* of parental ungodliness upon their families as well as upon themselves.

Secondly. Through such procedure on the part of the Supreme Legislator, there is offered to parents themselves the greatest possible inducement against a course of impiety. If the consequences of men's sins terminated with themselves, they would be much greater sinners than they are. Multitudes who seem neither to venerate the Divine character, nor to value their own happiness, are nevertheless shocked at the idea of being the instruments of misery to others. This feeling of sympathy for others, exists in none stronger than in parents. Whilst contemplating the legitimate results of their sins upon their families—while dwelling upon the tears and distresses of a tender wife, and the ruin and degradation of afflicted children, where is the husband or father, who feels himself not under the most powerful restraints against profligacy and crime. Thus the poor degraded drunkard, when he has lost all sense of shame, so far as he is himself concerned, will often weep as he looks upon the children around him, whom he has injured and probably ruined by his revelings. If, then, the word of God warrants men to believe, that in a course of impenitence, of unbelief, and of open crime, they are not only destroying themselves, but also pulling down destruction upon their

households, how much greater would be their guilt in their own view, and how much greater the necessity of immediate reformation?

Thirdly. As the blessings of piety are offered not only to parents as individuals, but are likewise extended to their children through them, the motive to a life of holiness becomes almost irresistibly great. Here, too, as in the case above, many, who seem willing to live destitute of the pleasures and blessings of religion, themselves, yet seem to feel a kind of sympathetic anxiety, that their families should not be deprived of those enjoyments which a life of holiness yields. And even in instances, where there is a concern felt by parents for their own spiritual welfare, the fact, that their acceptance of salvation would not only bless them, but their offspring also, renders the offers of salvation much more influential and important. When the parent perceives that the conversion of his own soul to God will, by the divine blessing, open in his family a fountain of happiness which would not only enrich by its streams his own life, but the lives of his remotest posterity possibly, how tremendous is the motive which pleads with his heart, to seek such conversion with all his ability.

For God, therefore, to constitute in matters of piety, as in every thing else, parents as the mediators between Him and their children, and thus to regulate, so to speak, his deportment towards their children, as they conduct themselves towards him, has the very strongest tendency possible to increase the fear and glory of God amongst his creatures.

Secondly. I now proceed to establish, both from Revelation and Divine Providence, the proposition that the

dealings of God *with children are in a very high degree determined by the character and conduct of the parents, and the relation such parents bear to Him.*

1. In demonstrating the above fact, we refer, in the first place, to the case of our great first parent, Adam. That the world is now in a condition different from that in which it was originally created is clear, both from reason and Revelation. None probably will deny this fact—and that the present degraded and sinful condition of mankind is to be ascribed, as to its original source, to the transgression of the early progenitors of the human race, is plainly taught in the Scriptures. The threatening previous to that first sin was, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Gen. 2: 17. The apostle Paul, in Romans 5: 15, declares that “through the offence of one many are dead.” Again, in verse 17, of the same chapter, he employs the following language: “By one man’s offence, death reigned by one.” Also in the 19th verse he says, “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” Now it is evident from the whole tenor of these quotations, as well as from their express declarations, that *what was threatened upon Adam in case of transgression has, through the medium of that transgression, fallen upon his posterity.* It is certain that he sinned; it is equally certain that his ruin has become that of the human race, as descending from him. Now, it matters not whether we account for the *transmission* of such ruin upon moral or physical principles, as to the great truths involved in this subject. In either case Adam was the federal head and representative of his posterity; and his conduct in that respect affected the whole of his natural

descendants. Suppose, then, we account for this upon what may be termed physical principles. As all nature is but subservient to the moral government of God over his creatures, these physical causes, or instruments by which depravity is supposed to be propagated, must also be subservient to that government; and must therefore operate but in perfect conformity to the nature and character of such moral administration. If, therefore, the propagation of depravity be inferred from *human circumstances*, still the appointment and arrangement of those circumstances must have the *reasons* of their existence, character, and connections with men, *entirely in the moral world*. But if, on the other hand, we account for the transmission of moral evil upon *moral principles*, still none will deny that the *physical circumstances of man* are the *medium* through which these moral principles may be said to operate. As therefore the supposition that Adam was the federal head of the human race, and that depravity is propagated by *moral law*, supposes no miracle—no deviation from the regular order of things,—so the supposition that the propagation of depravity is to be attributed to the *physical condition of man*, also embraces in it *certain moral reasons* as the ultimate cause, both of the allotment of such condition to man, and of the propagation of depravity thereby. Probably few modes of reasoning have more conduced to the injury and perversion of the truth, than that which embraces in it the separation of the moral from the physical world. This is the old ground of controversy between infidels and believers, and between errorists of all descriptions and the advocates of sound doctrines. In the natural world men seem to believe that whatever can be traced

to physical causes, however mysterious those causes, yet must not only be *true*, but *right*. But in the moral world, where results are ascribed to causes the precise nature of which they do not understand, and the mode of whose operation is concealed, here they are staggered, and are rather disposed to doubt than believe.

If, therefore, it be true, upon what principles soever it be accounted for, that the fall of Adam has involved also the ruin of his posterity, then is it also true that God's conduct towards that posterity has been in a very high degree determined by the conduct of their great ancestor. It is not asserted that men are not themselves sinners—but that the whole character of their natures and circumstances have been changed through the transgression of Adam, as its instrumental cause; and that God consequently regards them differently from the manner in which we may suppose he would have regarded them, had not their great progenitor have sinned.

2. Another proof of our doctrine we deduce from the history of the pious Noah and the antediluvian world.

What we wish here to establish is, that the destruction of those multitudes of young children which must have existed in the world before the flood, was the result of parental impiety, and that the salvation of the descendants of Noah was the effect of that patriarch's holiness of life. Now, with regard to the children thus destroyed, it is evident that many of them had formed no moral character at all themselves; and also that many others could not have been so very great *actual* sinners, from the want of sufficient age: on the contrary, the character and conduct of their parents are thus exhibited—"And God saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Again the divine displeasure towards such corruption is thus strikingly expressed—"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Gen. 6: 5—7. Here the wickedness of those then adults, and very many of them parents, is assigned as the reason why God would destroy, not only these abandoned sinners themselves, but their families and their children.

With regard to Noah's children, we have nothing definitely expressed as to their moral character. The Bible does not ascribe their salvation to their own piety, but to the piety of their parent. The character given of this good man is contained in this brief passage: "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with God," verse 9. In verse 18, after God had informed him of his determination to destroy the ungodly world around him, he thus speaks: "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, *thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives, with thee.*" It is evident, therefore, that the favor shown to his family was the immediate result, through grace, of the piety of this patriarch himself. Here, then, we see a large number of children perishing beneath a flood, as the result of parental wickedness; and, on the other hand, we see a family of children saved through the influence of parental piety.

3. Another evidence of the truth in hand is to be found in the history of Abraham. The calling of this patriarch *from idolatry*, implies in it the leaving of the rest of mankind *to their idolatries*. Now, that the calling of Abraham away from idols, and the forming with him of a covenant of mercy, embraced not only himself, but his posterity also, the inspired history of many centuries abundantly attests. And, on the contrary, that the forsaking of the rest of the world to their idolatrous inventions and all its miseries, likewise embraced not only the nations of that particular age, but their descendants also, the whole after history of those nations most lamentably proclaims. Here, too, is another instance of God's making, so to speak, the conduct and character of the parent the criterion of his treatment towards the child.

4. Lot's preservation and the destruction of the inhabitants of the cities of the plain, furnish another instance of the above principle. True, that in this case some even of the children of this good man perished in the general ruin ; still, however, the blessing of deliverance was offered also to them ; and it was only in consequence of its disdainful rejection that they perished with the rest. The manner in which the angels addressed Lot is as follows : " Hast thou here any besides ? Sons-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place, for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord ; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Then the historian states that, in pursuance to this direction, " Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said,—Up, get ye out of this place,

for the Lord will destroy it. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." Then said the angels to Lot, "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." Now, it is certain from this narration that both the offer of salvation to Lot's sons-in-law, as well as the rescue of that part of the family he had with him, were predicated upon his character and the relation they sustained to him. On the contrary, the destruction of the children and babes of Sodom occurred through parental ungodliness. This, too, is a striking illustration of our principle.

5. In the account given us by Moses of the rebellion of Korah and his company, we have also an exhibition of the same truth. From some reasons of jealousy, Korah, who was of the seed of Levi, and first cousin to Moses, excited a very large revolt against the leader of Israel. Two hundred and fifty princes were associated with him, particularly Dathan and Abiram, the descendants of Reuben. In order to suppress this rebellion, Moses directed them all, as well as Aaron, to offer incense in censers before the Lord, declaring that "whom the Lord should choose, he should be holy." It seems that from obstinacy the leaders of this faction, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, would not leave their tents. The Lord then commanded Moses to withdraw the congregation from the tents of those wicked men. No sooner had this been done, and Moses addressed the people, than the "earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, *and their houses*, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and

the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation." Num. 16: 32, 33. From comparing Exod. 6: 24, with Num. 26: 11, it will appear that the children of Korah, being probably settled among the congregation, were not destroyed with their father. But that the wives and children of Dathan and Abiram were destroyed with them is evident from the 27th verse of this 16th chapter of Numbers. Here it is said that "Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and *their wives, and their sons, and their little children.*" Immediately after it is said, as above quoted, that the earth opened her mouth and consumed them all. Thus terribly did the wickedness of these men bury, not only themselves, but their families also along with them, in the most awful ruin; this ruin too, let it be remembered, was the effect of miraculous power.

6. Another instance of the above truth, as marked by the pen of inspiration, is to be found in the history and destruction of Achan. In reference to him it is said, "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen and his asses, and his sheep and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said; Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones." Joshua 7: 24, 25. Now, whatever may be said of the adult years of his sons and daughters, and their compliance with their father's crime, yet is it evident that the object of such awful punishment was to impress most

deeply upon the minds of the Israelites, the dreadful evil of violating the covenant and laws of God. Nor can it be shown that his sons and daughters were adult, or that they did comply with their father's transgression. Nor can it be proved, that the destruction of the smallest children, in a case of this sort, is at all inconsistent with the conduct and character of God, as exhibited in the Scriptures.

7. The universal destruction of the children of those nations whom the Israelites, under the express command of God, subdued, is another proof of our doctrine. That such children were invariably put to death, is asserted again and again. See Num. 21: 24—35, also 31: 17. In this last, Moses directs the Israelites who had gone to the war, expressly, to “kill every male among the little ones.” See also, in addition to the above references, Joshua 6: 21. 8: 20—28. 10: 28—40. 11: 11—23. In the 20th verse of this last chapter, it is specially said, “For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses” This war, then, against the inhabitants of Canaan, was carried on by divine authority and command,—its precise character, too, was also of divine injunction,—the historian, also, is particular in relating the entire destruction of the nations, in the destruction of even *sucking babes*. Here, then, we see large multitudes of *small children* destroyed along with their parents, *through parental wickedness*.

8. Another instance will be found in the history of the pious king David. In that covenant into which God entered with David, special reference is made to his descend-

ants. "And when thy days," says God to this good king, "be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee, and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever." 2 Sam. 7: 12—16. In the subsequent history of the Hebrews, we find repeated allusions to this promise of God to David, in reference to his seed and kingdom.

9. The denunciations of God against the two kings of Israel, Jeroboam and Ahab, extended not only to them, but to their children likewise. Of the former it was declared as follows, 1 Kings 14: 11, "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat; for the Lord hath spoken it." Of the latter it was pronounced, 1 Kings 21: 22, "Behold I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity; and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin." In each case, subsequent history attests the accurate fulfillment of these predictions. Here, then, the sacred Scriptures exhibit two kings as plunging their families into ruin along with themselves, even to the third and fourth generations.

10. Another similar instance will be found in the destruction of those who were instrumental in having Daniel

put into the lion's den. Of them it is said, Dan. 6: 24, "And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den." Now, although this may be said to be the act of a heathen king, yet was it but the just visitation of punishment upon the enemies of Daniel; and for this very purpose it is evidently introduced into the sacred writings. That the sacred writer approved the conduct of Darius in this respect, the most careless reader may discover.

11. The woes which Christ denounced against those cities where he had done most of his mighty works, were also denounced against the children as well as against the adult inhabitants. "Woe unto thee," says he, "Chorazin; woe unto thee Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." See Matt. 11: 21—24.

12. In Christ's predictions as to the destruction of Jerusalem, children are embraced. It is said, "And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days will come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children

within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19: 41—44. In chapter 23: 28, 29, the same thought is exhibited under a different form. Christ there, addressing that weeping company of females who were following him to crucifixion, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck." That all these evils fell upon the Jews at the destruction of their metropolis, and afterwards, history abundantly attests. Nor have they recovered from them even to this day; but still in that nation is God punishing the rebellion of their forefathers.

13. The prayer of the Jews, when desiring from Pilate the permission to crucify Christ, included in it their children. "His blood," exclaimed the enraged multitude, "be on us and on our children." Matt. 27: 25. Now, no one will justify such an imprecation; still, however, does it show how inseparable in the eyes of men are the circumstances and condition of children from those of their parents.

14. When even Christ forsook a country or people, he forsook both young and old. See Matt. 8: 34. 13: 58. John 7: 1, and in connection with these, Acts 13: 51. Whenever a city received the gospel, it was received for the young as well as for the adult; and whenever they rejected it, they discarded its blessings, not only from themselves but also from their children.

15. Those judgments which Christ predicted as evils

that would befall all nations, referred also to children. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matt. 24: 7.

16. In that destruction which is spoken of in the Revelations, as connected with the progress and triumph of divine truth, children are included. "And I saw," says John, "an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both *small* and great."

17. Another form in which this truth is exhibited in the Scriptures, is to be found in the second commandment of the decalogue. In that command it is expressly said, "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Ex. 20: 5, 6. Let it be remembered, that this is a part of that moral code, which contains in itself the summary of all obedience to the law of God, so far as man is concerned; and, that, as such, its obligation is both universal and perpetual; let this be remembered, we say, and how solemn is this declaration of Jehovah! He here distinctly recognizes it as the prerogative of his throne, and the mode of his administration, to "*visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.*"

18. In those blessings and curses, which the children of Israel were to pronounce in so solemn a manner on entering Canaan, standing the one part on Mount Gerizim, and the other on Mount Ebal, children were also included. In chapter 28th of Deut. and verses 3, 4, it is said, "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body,* and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep." On the contrary, it is said in verses 17, 18, "Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; *cursed shall be the fruit of thy body,* and the fruit of thy land," &c.

19. The promises of God to his people usually embrace their children. The instances of these to be found in the Scriptures are so very numerous, that it will be impossible either to select or refer to them all. In Gen. 17: 7, we find the following promise addressed to Abraham; "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed after thee*, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and *to thy seed after thee*." In Deut. 4: 40, Moses thus speaks: "Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and *with thy children after thee*, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee for ever." In John 5: 25, it is said of the righteous, "Thou shalt know also that *thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth*." The Psalmist, speaking of the good man, says, "He is ever merciful and lendeth, and *his seed is blessed*." Ps. 37: 26. In Prov. 11: 21, the wise man declares, "Though hand

join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished ; *but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.*" In Isaiah 40: 3, it is said, " For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.*" Let it be remembered that this last is a prediction relative to the kingdom of Christ under the gospel. In the 65th chapter and 23d verse are these words : " *They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.*" This remarkably significant passage is also a prediction concerning the gospel church. In Jer. 32: 39, the prophet thus speaks : " And I will give thee one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them *and of their children after them.*" In addition to the above passages which I have quoted, let the reader consult also the following : Deut. 5: 29. 12: 25, 28. 2 Chron. 30: 9. Ps. 25: 13. 112: 2. 128: 3. Is. 43: 5. 49: 25. 59: 21. 61: 9. 65: 23.

20. The threatenings of God against the wicked usually extend to their offspring also. Speaking of the wicked, Job says, " If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword ; and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread." Job 27: 14. In Psalm 137: 8, 9, the Psalmist thus expresses himself, " Oh daughter of Babylon who art to be destroyed ; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and *dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*" In Is. 13: 16, are the following words, which were spoken in reference to the Jews : " Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes ; and their houses shall be spoiled." Jeremiah

making prayer to God, thus expresses himself, "Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword." Jer. 18: 21. In Jer. 32: 18, the prophet also addresses God in prayer thus: "Thou showest loving kindness unto thousands, and recompenseth the iniquity of the fathers into *the bosom of their children after them.*" In Ezekiel 9: 5, 6, God is represented as saying to certain men who prefigured the destroyers of Jerusalem, "Go ye after him," (the man with the ink-horn,) "through the city and smite; let not your eyes spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and *young*, both maids and *little children* and women." Speaking of Israel, the prophet Hosea says in the name of God, "Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left." Hosea 9: 12. In Nahum 3: 10, are the following words, "Yet was she carried away; she went into captivity; *her young children* also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets." See also Job 31: 8. Ps. 79: 6. Prov. 17: 13. Jer. 22: 28—30. 36: 31. Lam. 4: 10.

That God then regulates his treatment of children in a very high degree by the conduct of their parents towards him, is a doctrine plainly and abundantly taught throughout the Scriptures.

To all this amount of evidence, however, there may be adduced a few passages which would seem at first to teach an opposite doctrine. These passages are the following. In Deut. 24: 16, Moses declares, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers, every man shall be put to death for his own sin." In 2 Chron. 25: 3, 4, are the follow-

ing words, "Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he (Amaziah) slew his servants that had killed the king his father. But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, the fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin." In Ezekiel 18: 2—4, the prophet thus speaks, "What mean ye," says the Lord to his people, "that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge! As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die."

In reference to the two first of these passages, it is evident that they respected more the civil law than religious obligation. And Moses here instructed the Israelites, particularly their judges, that when a father was condemned for crime against their institutions, that the son should not be put to death also. The texts in Chronicles only show that Amaziah complied with this injunction of Moses. In reference to the latter passage, it seems to have been proclaimed originally among the Jews, in order to remove an imputation they had cast upon God. This imputation was that the *identical crimes* of the fathers had been charged to the children's accounts, and were punished in them. This is what they meant by saying, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Now, God declares to them, that it was not in consideration of the personal guilt of their

fathers that he punished them ; but in view of their own sins. It was not true that the fathers alone were guilty and they innocent : but it was true, that they had patterned after the impiety of their fathers, and were justly enough involved in their condemnation.

These latter passages are therefore to be regarded as explanations of the principle confirmed by the others—they are limitations of the former truth—they are exceptions to a very general rule. The Jews either had perverted, or were in danger of perverting, the doctrine supported above ; and these were addressed to them to disabuse their minds of erroneous impressions. In fact, their misconceptions had risen so high in the days of Ezekiel, that, according to the balance of that 18th chapter, it seems, that they supposed the child of a good man could not do evil, and that the offspring of the wicked must inevitably perish, whatever might be his conduct. The very existence, however, I would observe, of these limitations and explanations shows that the general principle which they were designed to limit and explain, had a previous existence.

Having dwelt so long on the evidence drawn from Revelation in support of this doctrine, I can but barely allude to that deduced from Divine Providence. I will here only state, that in all the afflictions and enjoyments of life, in its riches and poverty, its honor and degradation, its civil and religious circumstances, and every thing almost connected with man in this life, children are daily the partakers of a common lot along with their parents.

From the above reasoning, two inferences may justly be made.

1. First, that it is perfectly consistent with the nature of God, and the whole character of his government, to make a difference between the children of believers and unbelievers, of saints and of sinners. It is what he has uniformly and invariably done. Why should not the same thing exist at present? Even before the days of Abraham this principle existed. The covenant formed with that patriarch was but a recognition and embodying of that principle. And the same truth must hold good as long as there is difference on earth between believers and unbelievers; sin and holiness. *It is founded on the very nature of things; it can only cease when that nature shall be changed.*

2. A second inference is, that it is proper and wise, that God should designate this difference between the children of believers and unbelievers by some appropriate symbol or religious rite. If this difference really exists, it ought to be known and felt: now, nothing certainly answers so well this designation, as the application to the children of believers of a religious ceremony of some sort. It is in this way the distinction between the pious and the wicked is exhibited, and in a good measure maintained; and it is in this way alone the difference between their offspring can be properly recognized.

LECTURE VII.

THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH.

THE word church is translated from the Greek ἐκκλησία. This latter term was used by the Greeks to denote any collection of persons whatever, separated from a promiscuous multitude. A few examples of this we have even in the New Testament. Consult the Greek of Acts 19: 32, 39, 41. The almost universal meaning, however, of this term in the Testament is a *religious* assembly. There is, too, peculiar beauty and force in this appropriation of the word. According to its derivation, it means an assembly *called out* from the multitude of men for special purposes. Now, what collection of persons is, in so high a sense, called out from among the rest of mankind, and set apart to such solemn employment and duties, as the church of Christ? The English term church is, I think, invariably used in this way, except where it is employed to designate the building in which a religious assembly ordinarily meet for divine worship.

By the term church, then, in its more extended application, is meant, *that kingdom which Christ has set up in this world*. It is in reference to the church, considered

as a kingdom, that it is so repeatedly called in the New Testament "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven," in order to distinguish it from mere civil governments.

The church of Christ may be considered either as *visible* or *invisible*. "By the invisible church, we mean the whole body of sincere believers of every age and nation, that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ, the glorious Head thereof." By the visible church is meant, the *body of those who profess the true religion, together with their children.*" It is the identity of the latter we are about to consider in the present lecture.

By the identity of the visible church, we mean that "it is *one* in all ages and throughout the world." Variety in institutions, differences in administrations, and even opposition in some of her doctrines, do, by no means, destroy this identity; and still, amidst successive declensions and reformations, lapse of time and change of officers, the church of the Redeemer, as to her essence, retains the same continuous and harmonious existence. In order to render our meaning more perspicuous, we will introduce a few illustrations. Thus, the identity of human existence is preserved amidst all the changes to which human life is subject. The infant, the child, the youth, the man, the father, is nevertheless the same identical person. The river, too, which has been flowing for ages, and which has perpetually changed its waters, is nevertheless called the same river, as it is supplied from the same fountain, flows in the same channel, and maintains the same direction. As natural day, likewise, though it has its early tints, its twilight, its sun-rising, its meridian splendor, its decline

and end ; and though it may have been overcast at intervals with clouds, and subject to many vicissitudes ; yet is it but one and the same day. So with the church : though it has existed from ages, and been subject to many vicissitudes and changes, depressions and exaltations, yet it has uniformly maintained the *same essential existence*.

1. The first argument in support of this position is, that the mediation of Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church, has uniformly been the same.

That purpose of grace for man, as lost and undone, which God had concealed in his own mind from all eternity, was first announced to our world in the curse, which Jehovah pronounced upon the serpent, the betrayer and destroyer of the human race. “ And I will put enmity,” said God, addressing the serpent, “ between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen. 3: 15. In this prediction is embraced the fact, that God would set up in the woman’s seed, or in Christ, a kingdom in opposition to that of Satan, and which should ultimately triumph over the dominions of darkness. Isaiah, in his prophecy, chapter 9: 6, 7, uses the following language in reference to the same offspring of the woman and his kingdom : “ For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the *government shall be upon his shoulder* : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever.” In Daniel 7: 14,

the Spirit employs the following words, as descriptive of the same kingdom: "And there was given him (Christ) dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In Phil. 2: 9, 11, the Apostle thus speaks of the same kingdom: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Hebrews 2: 8, 9, we find the following language as applied to the same subject: "But now we see not all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." In 1 Cor. 15: 24—28, the Apostle thus describes the final perfection and accomplishment of this mediatorial kingdom: "Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and all power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then also shall the Son himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The same

kingdom, as to its results, is beautifully spoken of in Rev. 14: 1—3.—“And I looked,” says John, “and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.”

According, therefore, to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ did, in point of fact, undertake a mediatorial kingdom in reference to men in this world; which kingdom was coeval with the apostacy, and shall only be resigned when all of God’s elected people shall be received safely into heaven. This kingdom, then, is *one* as to its existence, and uniform as to its administration. It is the dominion of one and the same sovereign, over the same subjects, and for the same grand purposes.

Now if the mediatorial kingdom of Christ in heaven be *one*, the church, which is but the administration of that kingdom on earth, is likewise *one*.

2. A second argument, by which we prove the unity of the church, is, that the same reasons that exist why Christ should have a church on earth at all, have uniformly and always existed from the very fall of man. These reasons are numerous and various; some of them we will specify.

First. The first reason why a church on earth was needed, was, to give a display of divine glory and grace.

It is the very nature of God to exhibit before his creatures and to his own infinite and most holy contemplation, that boundless excellence which dwells in himself. All the creation around is but a display of the perfections of God. It is in this way that he fills all space with existence, and beauty, and order, and happiness; and that he collects around his own throne the loud songs of all his works. But in order to display himself thus, the Creator selects the very best means, and proceeds upon the very strictest rules of order. Thus his vast creation is not one boundless chaos of confusion, but a most stupendous system of harmony and regularity. The light with which our globe is blessed, is not scattered confusedly amidst surrounding masses of opaque matter; but secretly collected into or around one vast central globe, administering to us with the most perfect order. So in the moral world. The dispensations of divine grace and mercy to man, instead of being scattered confusedly over the world, have been chiefly concentrated in one point—the church. It is in the church that the angel of mercy stands diffusing a heavenly brightness through all her various branches. It is here that God displays the infinite riches of his grace to man.

The language of Scripture on this subject is most beautiful and expressive. Comparing the church to a virgin, the Psalmist exclaims, “Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” And again, “The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.” Psalm 45: 2, 13. Similar to this is the language employed by St. John in Rev. 21: 2, as descriptive of the church:

“And I John,” says he, “saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Isaiah addressing the church says, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isa. 60: 1. Speaking of that display of the grace and wisdom of God which the church shall afford to angels, the Apostle Paul thus expresses himself; “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by *the church* the manifold wisdom of God; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eph. 3: 10, 11.

It is evident, therefore, that one great end for the institution of a church on earth is, thereby to make a display of divine glory and grace. Now this end has uniformly existed from the apostacy of man. The fall of man opened the way for such a display of divine perfection; and the church was selected from the beginning as the proper channel through which to make such display.

Secondly. Another reason for the institution of a church on earth is, to constitute the proper organ for the reception of divine truth, and the best means for its maintenance and defence.

Ignorant as man must have been originally, of that great plan of mercy which God had devised for his salvation, he was also ignorant of all those truths and institutions connected with that plan. In order, therefore, to his salvation, both the plan, together with its various parts, must be revealed to him. And as to the mode of this revelation, it must be either to each one of the human

family separately ; or to a set number acting as a kind of delegation for the rest. The former method must have been not only complex, but confused ; as then every man would have his own revelation. It is, too, contrary to the common order of nature, and the uses even of human society. A set number of men, therefore, must act in this matter for the rest. But since men generally were averse to the reception of such revealed truths, and were renouncing perpetually the true worship of God, it became necessary that God himself should select, and call out to that office, those whom he pleased. Those thus called out and selected by God to be the medium of the communication of his truth to men were his church.

But it was not only necessary that this truth should be received, it must likewise be preserved for the benefit of future generations. For this purpose, too, a special body of men was necessary, since nothing is more evident, than that if divine truths were not committed to a particular society of men for preservation, they would inevitably perish from the earth. Amidst all the efforts ever made on this subject by the most zealous advocates of the truth, darkness still in a very high degree covers the earth. How deplorably dreadful, then, would be the condition of the world, were the maintenance and diffusion of gospel light and grace not intrusted to communities whose special business it is to attend to this very matter. In order, therefore, to maintain and defend the truths revealed to man, it was essentially necessary that a particular society should be constituted and preserved on earth to attend to this very business. But who should this society be, unless it be

the church of God ? The church of God, then, has been, from the earliest ages, both the receptacle of divine truth, and the medium of its preservation.

Thirdly. Another reason for a church on earth which has ever existed, is, to constitute the grand instrument of men's salvation. We doubt not at all but that there are many who have never heard of the visible church, who, nevertheless will be saved ; and, we believe, that there are many within the pale of the visible church, who shall finally be cast into outer darkness. Still, however, is it true, that the visible church is the ordinary medium through which God reaches, converts, and saves men. The apostle Paul has very forcibly expressed this truth in the following text, 1 Cor. 1: 21—"For after that," says he, "in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God ; it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed." Again he expresses the same sentiment thus, Rom. 10: 13—15 : "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ?"

The mode by which the church effects the salvation of men is twofold. In the first place, by presenting to their minds that knowledge of God which is eternal life. Thus the Saviour commissioned the apostles to "go and teach all nations"—to "go and preach the gospel to every creature." When the gospel is thus presented to the minds of men by the church and her ministers, and applied by the Holy Ghost to their consciences, then it is in

the language of the Apostle, that the "sinner is convinced and judged, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he worships God, and reports that God is in his church of a truth." The other method is by receiving converts into her bosom, as into a nursery, where they are disciplined and trained up for heaven. The language of the Apostle on this subject is clear and forcible.—"And he gave some apostles; and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4: 11—13.

This object, too, to be accomplished by the church, viz. the effectuation of the salvation of men, is one that must, from its very nature, have been coeval with the fall.

All the reasons, therefore, for the maintaining of a church on earth at all, existing uniformly from the first annunciation of salvation to man, the church itself must likewise have existed during the same space. To suppose, therefore, that the church has not uniformly existed from the apostacy, is to suppose, either that the reasons for the existence of a church as above specified, did not exist, or that they existed without the corresponding existence of the church. But we have shown that the *reasons for a church* have uniformly and always existed. According, therefore, to the supposition, these reasons for the existence of a church have existed without the church.—That is, the purpose of God in the salvation of man absolutely de-

manded a church when no such church was furnished. This conclusion not only sets the providence of God against his purpose, but confuses and thwarts the great plan of redemption itself. The supposition, therefore, that the church has not always existed since the fall of man, is false: the contrary, therefore, must be true, that *the church has, from the apostacy of man, had one uniform and continuous existence.*

3. The visible church has, in point of fact, always existed from the family of Adam to the present day. By the visible church, let it be remembered, is meant a people professing the true religion and entering into covenant with God. This church was first set up in the family of Adam. To him was first announced the interposition of a Saviour; and in his family it was that the prefigurative victim first began to smoke. As his solitary family constituted the whole of the human species then in existence, of course, in common with that family, he enjoyed all of revealed truth that had then been made known to man. That he embraced this truth, and thus entered into covenant with God, is evident from this; that the first accounts we have of his household afterwards is in the offering of sacrifice. That Abel professed the true religion is not only evident from his history in Genesis, but from what the apostle says of him in Heb. 11: 9. "By faith," says he, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh." From what is said of Seth and Enos, we may infer that they were eminently pious. Of Enoch it is said, "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and

daughters." Gen. 5: 21. Certainly by his *walking with God*, we are to understand both, that he professed the true religion, and that he sustained a covenant relation to God. When men had become, too, exceedingly degenerate, the family of Noah not only professed, but maintained the true religion. Of Noah it is said, "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God." In consequence of his remarkable piety he was saved when the whole world beside was drowned. From Noah the visible church passed in a regular line of patriarchs to Abraham. True, no mention is made of the particular character of these patriarchs. But as we find religion in its purity in the family of Noah, and discover it again at the very commencement of the history of Abraham; it is evident that it had been retained in some way through the whole. It is true Joshua speaks of these patriarchs as the worshippers of false gods. Still, however, idolatry in this early age partook but very little of that grossness to which it was subsequently carried in the world. These very corruptions of the true religion, however, were the very reasons why God commanded Abram to "get from his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, to a land which he would show him." That Abraham professed the true religion, and stood in the relation of covenant to God, none can deny who will read his history. The same may be said of all the descendants of that patriarch down to the time of Moses. At this time a more regular order of things was introduced. The law of God was given to his church from Sinai. All those ordinances and institutions were now appointed, which tended to the promotion of piety among the Jews.

From the patriarchal form, the church now became national—a regular priesthood was appointed—a tabernacle for divine worship was erected, and a religious service ordained. In order to render the whole more solemn, the book in which the laws and institutions of this national church were written was sprinkled with blood ; as well as all the people, then solemnly as a whole nation entering into covenant with God. That this national and visible church existed continuously, though under varieties of circumstances, down to the time of Christ, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments abundantly attest. This church became at times exceedingly corrupt, it is true. Such, too, was its state at the advent of the Messias. Still, however, it was the visible church of Jesus Christ ; and still it had amid it much of alloy, something of pure gold. Still it had a pure seed, though that seed was small. Such were Zachariah, and Simeon, and Elisabeth, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, and many others who lived at the advent of the Redeemer. That the church has existed from Christ to the present day, though under great depressions at times, is a matter of history ; and none, probably, will be disposed to deny it. Thus evident is it that from Adam to the present day, God has maintained on earth a visible kingdom, which is his church, and the “body of Him that filleth all in all.”

4. The principal changes that have at different times taken place in connection with true religion, have taken place *in* the visible church.

Of these changes there are two classes, which deserve particular attention. The one, are those in which new institutions and doctrines have been introduced ; the

other, are those in which doctrines and institutions already existing, have been rescued from the abuses thrown upon them, through the declension of vital religion and the profanity of men.

First. We shall consider those changes which have taken place by the introduction of new doctrines and institutions. The church commenced, as we have already stated, in the family of Adam. To this patriarch were revealed the advent of a future Saviour, the fundamental principles of the moral law, and some of the modes of devout worship; together with the institution of a Sabbath and of typical sacrifice. Subsequently to the days of Adam, the doctrines and institutions of the true religion, were given chiefly through the instrumentality of three different persons—Abraham, Moses, and Christ. To Abraham was given in set form the covenant of membership in the kingdom of Christ, together with its affixed seal: to Moses was given the moral law in set form, together with the proper form and service of the national Jewish church. In Christ the great sacrifice for sin was offered, the gospel was exhibited more clearly; and the proper form and service of the Christian church was appointed. As to the assistance rendered the church by prophets, apostles, and others, they did little else than predict, explain, enforce, and spread the doctrines and institutions introduced by others.

Now, with regard to the doctrines and institutions introduced by the three persons named above, we assert, that they constituted but improvements *in* the same identical church.

This is true, in the first place, in reference to the

form and seal of church-membership given to Abraham. Abraham was a regular member of the patriarchal church. He worshipped God according to the truth ; and therefore sustained a covenant-relationship to Him. Now, the introduction of a set form of membership, together with its accompanying seal, was but the more solemn exhibition and confirmation of a principle which had existed in the church from the days of Adam. The patriarchs had uniformly been members of the visible church together with their children. When, therefore, God introduced into the church by Abraham, a regular form of membership, and a visible seal of such membership ; the introduction of such form and seal, was but an improvement in the visible church *then existing*.

Again. The improvements effected by Moses were also improvements *in* the visible church as previously existing. Moses was a regular member of that church ; and so were all the Israelites over whom he presided ; they had all been introduced into it during infancy. The moral law which was given him, was but the more clear and visible exhibition of principles previously existing in the church. The covenant into which the people solemnly entered with God, was but a more public and united expression of what, *as families and individuals*, they had all already done. The appointment of a tabernacle, was but the selection of one common place, where the Israelites, whose tents had previously been their separate places of worship, might assemble for the worship of God. The ordaining of a regular priesthood, was but the enlargement of a custom existing in the church from the first ; according to which, every father was the priest of his own

house. The specification of a tabernacle-service, was but the continuation of the family-service, long existing among the patriarchs. And so with regard to the rest. The form of the church, it is true, was changed from the patriarchal to the national; but this, however, did by no means affect its essential existence. The change effected here, was but such a change as is effected in the existence of a human being, when from childhood it advances to youth. The church had previously been but in childhood; it now reached its youth.

Lastly. The doctrines and institutions introduced by Christ were but improvements *in the church*; which church itself had previously existed from the days of Adam. The visible church was now national in its form: it existed among the Jews. As a whole, it was very corrupt. Still, however, many of its members were very pious. It was in this church, just at the time when some of its members too were expecting and waiting for his advent, that the Saviour was born. He was raised amidst its institutions; he conformed to its laws and service; and was in every respect a regular member of that church. In his public ministry he quoted its Scriptures, he enforced its doctrines and duties, and urged obedience to its presiding officers. See Matt. 8: 4. 23: 1—3. In his most evangelical discourses he but illustrated and explained the sentiments of the Jewish Scriptures; and almost on all occasions supported his argument by appropriate allusions to them. The doctrine of faith, which he so much enforced, was a doctrine that had existed in the church from the days of Adam. When he instituted the Lord's Supper, he was not only then sitting around the table of the Paschal Sup-

per, but evidently appropriated, with a very little change, a Jewish institution to the service of that particular form of the church which he was about to set up. When he selected *faith* as the ground of membership, he only rendered prominent what had existed from the first. Faith was always supposed in the professor of the true religion. The patriarchal church consisted of believing families; and the Jewish was but a nation of believers. When he commissioned his apostles to "go and teach all nations," it was but in fulfillment of very many prophecies in the Jewish Scriptures. And when he commanded them to baptize, he but appropriated from the ceremonies of the ancient church one particular rite to the exclusion of many others. Washings or baptisms of various kinds had always existed in the Jewish church.

Thus, entirely throughout, were the improvements effected by Christ, improvements *in* a church, which, under two different forms, viz. the patriarchal and the national, had ever existed from the family of the great progenitor of the human race. We have already shown, that the improvements effected by Abraham and Moses were improvements *in* the same church. All the changes, then, so far as the introduction of new doctrines and institutions is concerned, that have ever taken place in connection with the true religion, have taken place *in the visible church* of the Redeemer.

Secondly. The other class of changes, to which reference was made, consists of those in which doctrines and institutions, already existing, have been rescued from the abuses thrown upon them, through the declension of vital

religion and the profanity of men. At this class of improvements we can only glance. The first rescue of the true religion from corruption, was effected by God himself, when he destroyed the world of mankind by a flood, excepting only Noah and his family. The next reformation was effected by Abraham, when God so peculiarly selected him and his posterity to be the depositories of his grace. Moses was the next great reformer of the church. The Israelites, it seems, when in Egypt, had followed several customs, contrary to sound faith; and had probably neglected, in a good degree, some of the institutions of religion then existing. These abuses, Moses, under the command of God, corrected. Samuel may also be regarded, measurably, as a reformer in Israel; also David, and Solomon, Josiah, and Nehemiah. Christ and his apostles may also be considered in the same light. They were instrumental in restoring the truths of religion to their pristine splendor. Most of the Fathers may be regarded as reformers in their day. And in later times, when the visible church had become exceedingly corrupt, the great God raised up Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Zuinglius, Knox, and others, to repair the breaches, and raise up the walls of his Zion. Thus in every age, as the church has declined and sunk, has God raised her up. The same being who has promised to conduct each separate believer to final rest, and to uphold and assist him whenever he may fall, upholds and conducts his glorious church through all her pilgrimages. As she faints, he upholds her,—as she is opposed, he defends her,—as her lamps flicker, he pours in fresh oil; and as her day demands, he measures to her

strength. Nor will he forsake her, until all he has spoken concerning her shall be accomplished, and she shall become "the bride, the Lamb's wife," in heaven.

5. Another argument to establish the identity of the visible church, is to be found in those prophecies relative to the triumph of religion under the gospel, which were spoken by ancient prophets, for the consolation of the pious Jews. A few of these prophecies we will here repeat. "And it shall come to pass," says Isaiah 2: 2, 3, "in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." In Isaiah 40: 1—5, are these words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed; and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In the 60th chapter of the same prophecy, from the 1st to the 4th verse, the prophet thus speaks, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory

of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see, all they gather themselves together, they come to thee : thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side."

Now, when it is recollected that God revealed such glorious truths as these to his ancient people, in order to console them, in the midst of the declensions of vital religion around them, it is impossible not to admit the identity of the church of Christ. The prophet saw that church around him in a languishing and dejected state ; but by the eye of faith and the spirit of prophecy, he saw that same church revive and shine, and spread throughout the earth. He saw Jerusalem, then in affliction as to fact, wave her banners upon the tops of the highest mountains. He saw all nations flowing like waters towards Zion. He saw the nations, under the hallowing influence of piety, convert their "spears into pruning hooks, and their swords into ploughshares." Thus animated by the final triumph of a cause, then under great depression, he seizes his harp from the willows, and raises the song of joy, amidst many apparent discouragements. It surely must have been the triumph of the same church, in which these holy men were raised, and in which they prophesied, that filled them with such exultation.

6. If the identity of the church be not preserved, then is there stricken from the church of the Redeemer, some of her most exalted worthies. Patriarchs and prophets,

and the great and the good, of every description, who preceded the advent of the Messiah, under these circumstances, belong to a different order of things altogether. Thus would there be swept at once away from the broad galaxy of Zion, some of her most brilliant luminaries. The sterling rectitude of the ancient Fathers is no longer an example. The sweet accents of the great singer of Israel no longer fall upon our ears, or roll in poetic eloquence through our souls. No longer are we overwhelmed by the sublime conceptions of Isaiah, or melted by the tender pathos of Jeremiah. All, all are removed away from us. They cease to be our brothers and teachers. A great gulf is sunk between us, and we cannot pass.

7. The identity of the church is also established by direct testimony from the Scriptures.

In Gal. 3: 28, are these words, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all *one* in Christ Jesus." In Rom. 3: 29, 30, the Apostle thus speaks, "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle discourses at length on the power of faith, as exhibited in the illustrious worthies of the Old Testament church. In the close of that chapter he thus remarks, "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, (i. e. the fulfillment of the promise,) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Heb. 11: 39, 40. Here, the Apostle speaks of

the Gospel church as being but the completion of the Old Testament church. If, then, it be but the completion of it, certainly they are but different parts of the same church of the Redeemer. In Eph. 3: 20—22, the Apostle thus speaks, “And are built (i. e. Gentiles,) upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.” Here the whole church is compared to a building, of which Jesus Christ is the foundation; and all believers, of every age and nation, are but different parts. In John 10: 14—16, the Saviour employs the following language, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” Here the Saviour compares the Jewish church to a fold; himself to a shepherd; the believing Jews to sheep already in the fold; and the Gentiles to distant and scattered sheep, whom it was his intention to collect and bring into the existing fold; and then, says he, there shall be “one fold and one shepherd.” In perfect conformity to this, the Apostle Paul, in Rom. 15: 27, speaking of the Jews, says, “For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (the Jews’) spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.” Again, in Rom. 11: 16—24, are these words, “For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are

the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say, then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell severity, but towards thee goodness; if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

In these texts the Jewish church is compared to a tame olive tree, of which the church itself was the stock, and the members of that church the branches. Through *unbelief* these branches are represented as being broken off; while the Gentiles, like branches from a *wild olive tree*, are grafted into the *old stock by faith*. The Apostle also declares that God will in due time replace the natural branches, by grafting them again upon *their own stock*. Now, whether we understand by the *root* or *stock*, (as it might be rendered,) in the above verses, either the Jewish church previous to Christ, or that church as completed by Christ; one thing is evident, that the figure represents the

very closest union between the Jewish church and the gospel.

All these general texts, together with many more, abundantly prove the identity of the visible church. No language could more clearly represent this truth, than the language of the Scripture itself.

LECTURE VIII.

THE FOUR COVENANTS.

THE word covenant is very frequently employed in the Scriptures, and with many different meanings. It sometimes means but a divine appointment. Thus the Prophet Jeremiah speaks of God's covenant with the day and night, (Jer. 33 : 20,) by which he means only the divine determination that day and night shall succeed each other to the end of time, as declared in Gen. 8: 22. The term covenant is also used to express simply a promise. Thus God gave to Phinehas the son of Eleazar "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood." Num. 25: 13. The meaning of this evidently is, that God gave to Phinehas and his posterity the promise, that they should fill the priesthood to a very remote period. The moral law written on the two tables of stone is also called "the words of the covenant," which God made with Israel. By a covenant is also meant in the Scriptures a contract formed between two equal parties; see Gen. 26: 28—31. 31: 43—53. In this sense the word is ordinarily understood amongst mankind. But there is another sense, in which the word covenant is to be taken as employed in the Scriptures,

both *more important, more complex, and more frequent*, than any of the preceding. It is when the word is employed to designate a covenant-transaction between God and man. As, whatever God proposes to man he is bound to accede to; such covenants as these wear the aspect and force of *law*. Yet, as God is pleased to elevate his creature man, and stipulate with him, these covenants have also the aspect and the nature of *promises*. Thus, a covenant between God and man may be regarded as a proposal on the part of God, whose stipulations are obligatory, and whose acceptance is rewardable. Besides these, the Scriptures also speak of a covenant-transaction between the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, in order to effect the salvation of men. By this we are to understand, but a harmonious consent, among the persons of the Godhead, to fulfill those several offices, in the plan of redemption, so commonly ascribed to each in the word of God.

Having thus explained the various uses of the term covenant, as employed in the Holy Scriptures, I now propose to show,

I. That there are four covenants spoken of in the Bible, far more general and important than any others; and of which most others may be said to be but branches.

I. The first of these, to which I here allude, is, what is usually termed, the covenant of works.

That that transaction, which took place between God and man, in his early probation, was a covenant, is evident from several considerations.

First. From the specification of a particular command to be the trial of his obedience. The specification of a particular command, or the ordaining of a particular rite,

does not, in every case, imply a covenant. But, in this case, it does. Although under the moral law of God, yet did Adam's whole obligation to that law, in a certain sense, and for a time, seem to be concentrated in this one precept. This was made the test of his obedience. For, why else should God prohibit the use of a particular tree? There was nothing morally wrong in partaking of the fruit of this tree, separate from its prohibition. Its prohibited specification, too, must certainly have been intended for one of two things: either as a religious ceremony to assist his piety, or as a trial of his obedience. If it had been designed for the former purpose, then its *prohibition* would have rendered it useless. Rites designed for the promotion of piety, are to be used; and it is by such use that they are rendered beneficial. Thus the Sabbath, as given to man in Paradise, was designed for his use. The specification, then, of a *prohibited* tree could not have been intended as a religious ceremony. It must, therefore, have been appointed *the test* of man's obedience. Now, if it were the *test* of man's obedience, then, certainly, man was placed, so long as it remained such test of his obedience, upon a state of *special* trial. But he could only have been put upon such a state of special trial through the means of a covenant. For the placing of man upon so distinct a state of probation, certainly implied in it, that his compliance with the divine will therein, would afford him blessings which previously he had not enjoyed.

Secondly. The limitation of man's state of trial, implied in it a covenant. The limitation of such state, we infer from the nature of the thing prohibited. This was

a tree, a single tree, in Paradise. Now, it seems manifest, that, as the human species should increase, and should, therefore, leave Paradise, and spread abroad upon other portions of the earth, that special tree in Paradise could neither operate as a religious rite, or a test of obedience, or in any other specially religious way. Being remote from it, it could neither assist the piety, nor try the obedience of men. It would, too, be in danger of being confounded with other trees, and so entirely lost. The trial of man must, therefore, have been designed to be but temporary. But if it were but temporary, it must have had special objects in view; and these objects, too, must have been of special advantage to man; since, to suppose any thing different, is contrary both to the divine character, and the mode of his administration. But if his probation involved in it special advantages, which, but for that probation, man would not enjoy; then was the appointment, by which he was placed upon such state of special and limited trial, *a covenant*.

Thirdly. The words in which the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was prohibited, prove that such prohibition involved in it the nature of a covenant. The words are these—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2: 17. Now, if the sentiments embraced in these words be spread out fully, they will be something of this kind. Addressing Adam, God says, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; if thou refrain from eating thereof, thou shalt *live*; but in the day thou eatest of it thou shalt *die*.' Now, certainly, as the *death* spoken of here im-

plied a loss of *benefits* then enjoyed by Adam ; so the *life* alluded to, must likewise have included in it *privileges*, then not in his possession. Now, whether these privileges referred to the confirmation of himself and posterity in a state of holiness, or to his reception into heaven ; or, which is more probable, to both, it makes no difference, as to the truth we are proving. In either case, this transaction between God and Adam was a covenant.

Fourthly. As this transaction between God and man in Paradise, in which man was lost, is similar to that between the Father and Son, through which he is redeemed ; and as this latter is usually represented in the Scriptures as a covenant, the former also must have been a covenant.

Fifthly. The seal of this transaction, which was the tree of life, proves it to have been a covenant. This it does in two ways. First, by its being a seal of that transaction. If any one will take the pains to examine, he will discover, that the use which God generally makes of seals in the Scriptures, is, to confirm his *promises*. The fact, therefore, that there was a *seal* connected with this prohibition, shows that there was a *promise* also associated with it. But, if there was a *promise* associated with it, it was a covenant. For what constitutes a covenant between God and man, is but a divine proposal or command connected with a promise. Again, the name given to this seal—The Tree of Life—proves this transaction to have been a covenant. Why was this seal called The Tree of Life, if not to establish the fact, that man's refraining from eating of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," would be the means of his obtaining a

life superior to what he then enjoyed. This representation, too, of the subject is confirmed by the figurative use of this tree in the Apocalypse—"To him that overcometh," saith Christ, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Rev. 2: 7. And, again, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life." Rev. 22: 14. According to these texts, that blessedness which man lost by his transgression, is represented as still being in reserve for the righteous, through the mediation of Christ, and is shadowed forth under the idea of the Tree of Life. The blessings originally designated therefore, by that tree, must have borne an analogy to those blessings which the believer shall enjoy in heaven.

It is, therefore, evident, beyond all doubt, that the transaction between God and Adam in Paradise, was, in all respects, a covenant.

This covenant, I would observe, was a *general* one ; that is, it was a covenant in which Adam stood as the head and representative of the whole human family, without exception.

It is not my design to enter into the various disputes connected with federal representation, and the introduction and propagation of depravity amongst mankind. It will be sufficient to my purpose to establish two points ; first, that the depravity of man has been effected through the transgression of Adam ; and, secondly, that had Adam *not* sinned, his posterity, as well as himself, would have been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness.

First, then, we assert that mankind have been rendered depraved through the fall of Adam.

This is established, in the first place, by fact. From the fall, until now, men have uniformly and universally been depraved. It is said of Seth, that "Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." Gen. 5: 3. This Scripture evidently was designed to teach us that the descendants of Adam, like himself after his sin, were depraved and sinful. That they were born not in the image which Adam had before his fall; but in that which he possessed afterwards. Now if men have uniformly and universally been depraved since the fall; and if Adam was perfectly holy before the fall; then certainly human depravity originated *in* the fall of man.

But this is also proved from plain texts of Scripture. In Rom. 5: 12, are these words, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Again, in verse 15, it is said, "Through the offence of one many are dead." In the 16th verse the same sentiment is thus exhibited: "For the judgment was by one (offence) to condemnation." In the 17th it is repeated thus, "By one man's offence death reigned by one." Again, in the 18th, it is expressed thus, "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" and in the 19th thus, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Now, certainly, a sentiment so often, so clearly, and so variously repeated, cannot be well misunderstood.

We hope, therefore, that the fact is sufficiently proved, that mankind have been rendered depraved through the fall of Adam.

Secondly. We now proceed to establish the proposition, that had Adam not sinned, his posterity, as well as

himself, would have been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness.

In reference to this, I observe, in the first place, that God can, without infringing in the least upon their free-agency, confirm in a state of holiness and happiness any of his intelligent creatures whatever. He actually has thus confirmed vast multitudes of angels and saints now in heaven. He has also promised to sustain all believers in the world of blessedness for ever.

The perseverance of the saints on earth is likewise effected through the same interposition of divine grace. Now, certainly, none will pretend that the free-agency of either the angels and saints in heaven, or of believers on the earth, is at all affected by such intervention of God's goodness. It is, therefore, perfectly within the lawful exercise of divine sovereignty, for God to have upheld all the posterity of Adam in original rectitude.

I again remark on this subject, that God did, in the covenant made with Adam, thus *promise* to uphold and sustain his posterity in a state of holiness and happiness.

The stipulations in that covenant, as we have shown, were in their very nature temporary. The probability therefore is, that it was designed that Adam, before the birth of a single child, should have been either *confirmed* in a state of felicity, or *fixed* in a state of wretchedness. Besides, if it was designed that Adam's posterity should have undergone a *special and temporary probation* as well as himself, before they were each of them separately *confirmed* in holiness; this special probation must have taken place either in reference to the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil then in Paradise;" or in reference to some

other specified thing. Now it evidently could not have taken place in reference to the tree of knowledge then in Paradise ; for as we have shown, when men were scattered over the earth, it would of course cease to be a test of their obedience. And if we suppose the specification of something else, this would only involve the world in endless confusion. Every man, then, would require a specified test of his obedience. Or, if we suppose compliance to the moral law to be made a *general test* of human conduct, this would but destroy all idea of God's entering into probation with men upon terms of a covenant ; and of his placing man upon trial in any other way, we have no evidence whatever. Suppose, too, that some should fall and others stand, what a world of confusion such a state of things would constitute. But, besides all these difficulties, there is still another. Men now come into the world in a weak and imbecile state. What test of obedience would be proper, with which to constitute a probation in such a case ? Such test could only be known by children as taught them by parents. And what if the parents themselves had sinned just after the birth of children ? The supposition, therefore, that Adam's obedience, and consequently his confirmation in holiness and happiness, would not have embraced his posterity, is involved in inextricable difficulty. The covenant with Adam must, therefore, have embraced his posterity as to its promises of special grace.

Again, as the *curse* consequent upon Adam's sin has reached all his posterity without exception, it certainly must be true, that had he not sinned, the *blessing* would have reached all his posterity without exception. To sup-

pose otherwise, is but to suppose, that that solemn covenant, entered into between God and man in Paradise, was a mere farce : in truth, it is but to cast scandal upon the character of God. What a partial and unjust covenant that must have been, in which God designed the threatening to include the whole human race, but the *promised grace* to have embraced but Adam himself!

This would but represent the disposition of God to be more disposed to wrath than to mercy. The fact, therefore, that the dreadful results of the fall of Adam have extended to all, proves beyond reasonable doubt, that the beneficial consequences of his obedience would likewise have extended to all, had he been obedient.

And again. As Christ sustains the same relation to his elect that Adam sustained to his posterity, and as the fulfilling of all righteousness by the former *secured* the salvation of his elect ; so perfect obedience in the latter must likewise have confirmed his posterity in a state of felicity. This is plainly to be inferred from what the Apostle says in Rom. 5: 19, “ For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Here it is affirmed, that through the sin of one, viz. Adam, many of his posterity were made sinners ; and that through the obedience of one, viz. Christ, many of his elect shall be made righteous ; certainly the inference is inevitable, that had Adam not have sinned, his posterity would, in consequence of his obedience, have been confirmed in a state of felicity.

We hope, therefore, that it has been satisfactorily proved, that had Adam been obedient in his state of trial, all his posterity would have shared in the advantages of

his obedience ; just as through his disobedience and fall they have all been involved in the consequences of his ruin.

Thus has it been shown, that the transaction between God and man in Eden was a most gracious covenant ; and that it was a covenant, which embraced in its stipulations and consequences the whole human race without exception.

1. A second general covenant which we specify, is that constituted between the Father and Son for the salvation of man. That there was a most harmonious agreement between the persons of the ever blessed Trinity, in reference to the redemption of man, the Scriptures abundantly demonstrate. With regard to this agreement or counsel, I would observe,

First. That it is usually represented in the form of a contract. In this contract, the Father is represented as *sending, sealing, anointing, and upholding* the Son. Thus in John 17: “Christ uses the following words in his prayer, “that the world may know *that thou hast sent me.*” In Is. 42: 1, the Father is represented as speaking thus of the Son, “Behold my servant *whom I uphold.*” In John 6: 27, Christ uses these words, “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you ; *for him hath God the Father sealed.*” Again, in Isa. 61: 1, Christ is introduced as speaking thus : “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because *the Lord hath anointed* me to preach good tidings to the meek.” In other texts of Scripture the Father is represented as intrusting to his Son a kingdom. Thus in Ps. 2: 6, he is represent-

ed as saying, " Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The king here alluded to is evidently Christ, as is clear from Acts 4: 25, 26. Again, in Ps. 89: 3, 4, where David is repeating God's promise to him, he represents God as speaking thus: " I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, *thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*" That this covenant or promise refers to Christ, of whom David was a type, is evident from Acts 2: 30. This whole transaction is beautifully and clearly related by the prophet Isaiah, 53: 10—12: " Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, (Christ,) he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he (Christ) shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of him shall my righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." In this passage are contained the following particulars.

1. The Father was willing that the Son should be put to shame. In this way we are to understand these phrases: " It pleased the Lord (or Father) to bruise him; He (the Father) hath put him (Christ) to shame."

2. Christ undertakes such humiliation and sufferings of his own accord. This is expressed in the following words: " He (Christ) hath poured out his soul unto

death." "And he bare the sin of many; and made intercession for the transgressors."

3. That the voluntary obedience of the Son was most meritorious. Thus it is said, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed." "By the knowledge of Him shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities;" and "*therefore* will I divide him a portion with the great."

4. That there should be a reward given to Christ for his humiliation and death. This is expressed in such passages as these, "He shall see his seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." "By the knowledge of Him shall my righteous servant justify many."

That transaction between the Father and Son, which refers to human salvation, is, therefore, justly enough styled a covenant.

Secondly. This covenant is usually represented as having existed in eternity, or before the foundation of the world. In Prov. 8: 22, 23, the wise man, speaking of Christ under the personification of Wisdom, thus expresses himself, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Again, the Evangelist John, in chapter 1: 1, seems to reiterate the same sentiment, when he says, "In *the beginning* was the Word." The Apostle Peter speaking of Christ, says, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter 1: 20. The Apostle Paul, in Eph. 1: 3, 4, thus

expresses himself, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Now, certainly, if it can be said, that believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that covenant of mercy, through which they were thus chosen, must also have existed from eternity.

Thirdly. The last remark which I shall make as to this agreement or covenant, formed between the Father and Son, is that it is general in its character.

It is not our design here to dispute as to the extent of the atonement made by Christ; but, simply to show, that vast multitudes have been benefited by his mediation. This truth was embraced in the very first annunciation of a Saviour to man. Says God, addressing the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3: 15. In this verse there is predicted a conquest which Christ should effect over Satan. But how was this conquest to be accomplished, but by the Redeemer's effecting the salvation of many souls, and thus bruising the old serpent under him? The same truth was also declared afterwards to Abraham in the following words: "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In this promise was foretold the fact, that the Redeemer should descend through the lineage of Abraham; and that the blessings of salvation would extend to great multitudes of men. The extent of the blessings of redemption is thus exhibited in the

2d Psalm, verse 8th, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." In these words, the Father is represented as offering to the Son vast numbers of the human race, as the purchase of his blood; and which should be given him through his own intercession, and the prayers of his people. Now, in John 17: 9—20, we find the Saviour actually making supplication for these very persons whom the Father thus offers to him for an inheritance. His words are, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. Neither pray I for them alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Again, in Isa. 53: 11, it is said, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." In Rev. 7: 9, John says, "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." This vast concourse are represented in verse 14 as having come "out of great tribulation, and as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They were those, therefore, who had been purchased by a Saviour's sufferings and death. Besides, too, the fact just proven, all men, even those who finally perish, receive very great benefit through the mediation of the Redeemer. Life and all its comforts, together with the offers of salvation, are all derived from this source. This covenant is, therefore, a *general covenant*; in one

sense, it extends to all mankind, in its highest benefits to a vast multitude, who, through divine grace, shall all finally be saved in heaven.

3. A third general covenant exhibited in the Scriptures, is that made with Noah. The words in which this covenant was formed are as follows: "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, and I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark to every beast of the earth: and I will establish my covenant with you: neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." Gen. 9: 8—11. That this transaction is a covenant, and that it is general in its character, are so plainly expressed in the words themselves, as to exclude all doubt.

4. The fourth general covenant is that formed with Abraham.

This covenant was expressed in the following words, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful; and I will make nations of thee; and

kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Gen. 17: 1—8.

That this transaction was a covenant, none will deny. It not only has in it all that is essential to a covenant, but is called such by God himself. We proceed, therefore, to show, that this was a *general* covenant, extending not only to the natural descendants of Abraham, *but to all believers down to the end of time.*

I. It is impossible to conceive of man's entering into a covenant relationship with God, as a son, a servant, or a believer, upon any other principles than those stipulated in this covenant. This will appear evident from analyzing the several parts of the covenant itself. There is embraced in it,

First. The renunciation of the world on the part of Abraham. This is not only exhibited in the whole transaction, and confirmed by the fact, but it is definitely expressed in the very first verse of this covenant. "I am the Almighty God," saith Jehovah, "walk *before me and be thou perfect.*" Now, it is impossible that Abraham should either "walk before God, or be perfect," without an entire *renunciation of the world.*

Secondly. This transaction embraced in it the most genuine repentance for sin, and the most evangelical faith. The repentance or humiliation of the patriarch, is expressed in the following language, "And Abraham fell on his

face ; and God talked with him." Certainly nothing could more strikingly exhibit the most genuine humility, than this act, or rather posture of Abraham. Such was his sense of unworthiness, that he did not dare to look up before God. But in entering into this covenant, Abraham also exercised evangelical faith. As "without faith it is impossible to please God," the very transaction itself, which was one of inexpressible grace, shows that the patriarch received this covenant in the exercise of faith. Now, there is no faith acceptable to God, but what is evangelical. Besides, Abraham proved his faith by his works ; for immediately as God left him, it is said, "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, *in the self-same day*, as God had said unto him." Gen. 17: 23. Certainly faith which produces such prompt and willing obedience, must be evangelical. Again, the person with whom Abraham here entered into covenant, was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Almost all divines are agreed, that the Saviour, who manifested himself to the disciples after his resurrection, for the confirmation of their faith, did also, very frequently, and for the same purpose, appear to the patriarchs and prophets, before his actual incarnation. That it was Christ who thus addressed Abraham, is evident from this, that the same person who in this chapter is represented as the Lord, in the next chapter is represented as visiting Abraham's tent in the plains of Mamre, accompanied by two angels. In the 17th chapter, the one in which the covenant is expressed, it is said, "And when Abraham was ninety years

old and nine, *the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, I am the Almighty God,*" &c. In chapter 18, which immediately succeeds in its narration the circumcision of Abraham's family, it is said, "*And the Lord appeared to him*, in the plains of Mamre ; and he sat in his tent door in the heat of the day ; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, *three men* stood by him." That one of these *three men*, as they are here called, was Christ, is evident from the succeeding history. For, when the two angels went on to Sodom to destroy the cities of the plain, it is distinctly stated, that "Abraham stood yet before *the Lord* ;" who was the third person spoken of. Gen. 18: 22. Here, then, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed himself to Abraham, both as "the Almighty God," and as a "*man*." Thus Christ says, in John 8: 56, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it and was glad."

Thirdly. In taking upon him this covenant, Abraham promised obedience. The command addressed to him was, "walk before me and be thou perfect." Certainly no language can express more genuine and more universal obedience than this. Now that Abraham, in reply to such command, *promised* such obedience, is evident. In the first place, he had no right to refuse,—he could not refuse without gross insult to God. And in the second place, he actually did consent to the whole covenant, which he showed in the prompt application of its seal to himself and his family. Now, if he consented to the whole covenant, he also consented to *be obedient to God*, which was a part of that covenant.

Fourthly. This covenant likewise embraced in it the promise of God, to take Abraham and all his, into a pecu-

liarly near relationship to himself, and to supply them with all needed spiritual and temporal blessings. This promise is expressed in such terms as these, "*Behold my covenant is with thee;*" "*and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.*" "*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.*"

Now, if God was pleased to constitute such a *peculiar covenant* as this, with Abraham and his descendants, certainly they sustained a relation to God which was *peculiar*. In such expressions as these, "and I will be their God," and, "to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," are embraced all temporal and spiritual blessings. What more could a creature desire, than for the great Jehovah to say, "and I will be thy God?" This one promise embraces in it every thing. Now, in order the more to confirm the faith of Abraham in this covenant, God also promises a *visible good*,—the land on which he then lay. It was but natural that this should be subjoined to the covenant. Every view of that land would but remind the patriarch of the covenant and its provisions. It would have the same effect upon him, that Joseph's allusions to his bones was calculated to have upon the Israelites when in captivity. But this land was not only promised as a kind of pledge of the covenant, it was likewise designed to exhibit *the temporal and spiritual blessings* of the covenant.

It was designed to shadow forth all necessary temporal blessings. It was itself a temporal blessing; and offering

to the Israelites a home, it seemed to exhibit the fact, that all other necessary temporal good, God would afford them. That he who had promised them a home, would also furnish that home for them. How cheering was this promise to the Israelites when in Egypt! How consoling to them, amidst the fatigues and distresses of the wilderness! And how comforting to them, when actually in possession of Canaan. How consolatory was it, to the poor man especially, while he remembered, in the very lot of land around him, the promise of God, to supply all his other necessary wants! And how must every pious husbandman, as he cultivated the soil,—soil given him by God himself, as a kind of confirmation of his covenant,—have planted in hope!

But this promise of Canaan, as annexed to God's covenant with Abraham, also shadowed forth that *heavenly country*, of which it was both the type and the seal, to every believing Jew. Of this we have the evidence in the Scriptures themselves. Speaking of Abraham and the pious Jewish Fathers, the Apostle Paul says, "For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And, truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but, now, *they desire a better country, that is a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.*" Heb. 11: 14—16. Again, speaking of Abraham in particular, the Apostle says, verses 9, 10, "By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: *for he looked for a*

city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The same doctrine is also expressed in the 3d chapter of this Epistle, 18th and 19th verses, as connected with the 1st and 2d verses of the 4th chapter. "And to whom," says the Apostle, "sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us, therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." From these quotations, as well as from the current testimony of the whole of the word of God, the promise of Canaan, as annexed to this covenant made with Abraham, was but a sensible exhibition of that country in heaven which was offered to the pious Hebrews. Hence, almost all the imagery under which heaven, as a country, is represented in the Scriptures, is borrowed from the land of Canaan. It is called "Jerusalem," "Mount Zion," the "city of the living God," &c. &c.

Thus have we shown, that this covenant embraced in it, on the part of Abraham, the renunciation of the world; genuine repentance for sin, and faith in a Messias; the promise of obedience; together with the promise, on the part of God, to take the patriarch and his descendants into a peculiarly near relationship to himself; and to supply them with all necessary temporal and spiritual blessings.

That the exposition thus given of the above covenant, was such as the Israelites apprehended it to be, is certain from their own history. In Lev. 26: 3, 12, God thus ad-

dresses Israel, "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them, I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." In Deut. 29: 9—15, where the children of Israel are represented as entering into covenant with God, we find these words, "Ye stand this day," says Moses, "all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God; as he hath said unto thee; and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us, this day, before the Lord our God; and also with him that is not here with us this day." Again, in chapter 26: 17, 18, Moses thus speaks to Israel, "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." In Is. 44: 12, 21, 22, the Lord thus addresses Israel through the prophet, "Yet now, hear O Jacob, my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen: Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee: Fear not, O Jacob my servant; and

thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee: thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." The subsequent history, therefore, of the Hebrews proves that they regarded themselves, in virtue of the covenant of God with them, to be a peculiar people: it also abundantly shows, too, that they were thus regarded by God himself.

Now, it is absolutely certain, that whoever enters into covenant with God, at any time, must take upon him this very covenant formed with Abraham; since it is impossible for him to enter into covenant with God upon any other stipulations whatever. God may not, it is true, literally promise him, as he did Abraham, and his descendants, the land of Canaan; still, however, he promises him maintenance in this life, and rest in the life which is to come.

2. My second remark on this subject is, that there was great propriety in the exact form of this covenant being given to Abraham.

Before the days of this patriarch, the church existed in an unembodied state. The pious, it was true, did enter into covenant with God. Still, however, the proper form of the covenant thus embraced, was not defined; its subjects, duties, and hopes, were not definitely expressed. When, therefore, the world generally had renounced the true religion, and idolatry was about to be extensively set up; it was most merciful on the part of God, as well as most wise, to *select his church, and to separate it from the wicked world around.* Now it was impossible for this separa-

tion to be made with the institutions then existing; since these were also held by the world generally. The Sabbath, sacrifice, and some of the precepts of the moral law, were then observed by multitudes. In order, therefore, to separate his people from the world around, God expressed the form of membership in his church, in *set words, and sealed it with a peculiar sign*. As Abraham was, therefore, the first to whom this *formal covenant* was made known, it was proper that the terms upon which he was admitted to membership should be, with little or no variation, the terms upon which all others should also be admitted to membership in the church. To suppose any thing to the contrary, is to suppose a change in God—is to suppose, that he now either requires *more* or *less obedience* than in ancient times: or, that he offers *more* or *less grace*.

3. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the new covenant, represents it as being in substance precisely what the Abrahamic covenant was. He expresses himself thus, quoting from Jer. 31: 31—34, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord, *for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and*

every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 8: 8—12.

That this covenant, which the Apostle here calls new, is but a repetition of the Abrahamic covenant in different words, is evident from the texts themselves. The substance of the whole is, "And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." How very similar is this to the words in the Abrahamic covenant: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be *a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*" And, again; "and I will be their God." This covenant, then, which the Apostle calls *new*, is but the same with that given to Abraham; and he calls it *new*, simply, *because God determined to fulfil its promises more abundantly.* It was only new, because, through the gospel, it was more clearly perceived, and accompanied with more of divine influence.

4. As the covenant made with Abraham referred not only to his natural descendants, but to Christ also; and as all who believe are said to be in Christ, there is reason to believe that the same covenant which referred to Christ, should also refer to believers who are in Christ. The only reason why such covenant should refer to Christ at all, is, for the benefit of the church, or of believers. Whatever reason there was, therefore, that the Abrahamic covenant should extend to Christ, there was the same reason for its extending to his church; that is, to believers. This, too, is the view of the apostle, when he says, "And

if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise.*" Gal. 3: 29.

5. That the covenant made with Abraham, embraced in it all believers down to the end of time, is the plain language of Scripture. In Rom. 15: 8, the Apostle thus speaks, "Now, I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." By Christ being here called "*the minister of circumcision,*" certainly can never mean, that in Christ that covenant, of which circumcision was a seal, had its termination or accomplishment. The word *minister* will not bear such a meaning. To minister means to serve, to advance, to promote, &c. If the Apostle, therefore, designed to say, that in Christ the Abrahamic covenant had its fulfilment, how could he possibly say that Christ was the minister of circumcision, or rather of the blessings promised and sealed by circumcision. On another subject he expresses himself thus, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." Assuredly, then, if he designed to say that that covenant of which circumcision was the seal, had its accomplishment in Christ, he would have said as above: "Now Jesus Christ is the end of circumcision." But, instead of this, he calls him a "minister of the circumcision." Besides, he could, in no manner, mean that the covenant, of which circumcision was the seal, had its final accomplishment in the person of Christ; since he has declared as above, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

In Phil. 3: 3, the Apostle speaks thus, "Yea, we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and

rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The Apostle certainly meant by this, that a fit subject for the covenant of circumcision was one "who worshipped God in the spirit, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh;" that is, one who was born again, who had evangelical faith, and had renounced the world. Now we have already shown, that the Abrahamic covenant embraced in it all these requisitions. The Apostle also designed to state, that Gentiles who had these qualifications, were also *actual participants* of the covenant made with Abraham, and of which circumcision was the seal. Or, we may thus state his meaning, 'We who believe, though Gentiles, are, in *reality*, what our opponents, the Jews, are but in name; *we are the true circumcision.*'

In Col. 2: 11, are these words, "In whom (Christ) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." In these words, the Colossian believers are said to enjoy, through their union with Christ, all the benefits of the covenant of circumcision. Certainly, this could not be so, unless that covenant extended its blessings to them as believers.

In Rom. 4: 11, 12, the Apostle thus speaks: "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the *father of all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also: *and not only the father of circumcision to them who are of the circumcision*, (or to the Jews,) but to those also who walk in the steps of that faith

of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised," (or to Gentile believers.) The object of the Apostle in these verses is, to prove, that a believing Gentile has all the advantages of a believing Jew. In order to illustrate this principle, he speaks of Abraham as being accepted of God, through faith, previous to, and, therefore, without the virtue of, circumcision. From this he infers, that the believing Gentile, who has never been circumcised, yet can be accepted of God through faith, even as Abraham was. He, therefore, concludes that, as the natural Jew was a son of Abraham by circumcision, so the believing Gentile was a son of Abraham, in a still higher sense, by faith, of which circumcision was only the sign. According, therefore, to this reasoning, the believing Gentile was just as much, in a spiritual sense, the son of Abraham, as the believing Jew; and just as much entitled to the promised blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Of course, this could not be, unless both the covenant and its provisions still existed. In fact, the very subject of debate between the Apostle and the believing Jews, was about the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, the Jews supposing either that they were entitled to all those blessings, or that, in their participation, they should have the pre-eminence; while the Apostle contended that one had no better right than the other. That the Jews, who believed, should embrace the sentiment above stated, was but natural; for the Apostle himself speaks of the introduction of Gentiles into the Jewish church as a very great mystery. His words are, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; *that*

the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promises in Christ by the gospel." Eph. 3: 5, 6. If, then, the believing Jew admitted the believing Gentile to be "a *fellow heir*" with him of the blessings of the Gospel, *but by special revelation*, how absurd is it for that Gentile, who has been admitted to such privileges but by special grace, to attempt in his turn to deny the Jew his right in what seemed but his natural place?

In Rom. 4: 16, 17, are these words, "Therefore it (heirship in the kingdom of Christ) is of faith: that it might be by grace; to the end *the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, (or Jews,) but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, (or Gentiles,) who is the father of us all:* as it is written, *I have made thee a father of many nations.*" In these verses the Apostle positively asserts, that the blessings proffered in the Abrahamic covenant were to be received and enjoyed *but by faith*; and that, consequently, *believing Gentiles were as much entitled to them as believing Jews.* The question therefore, in the days of the Apostle, was not, whether this covenant existed, or whether the blessings of the gospel were the same as the blessings of this covenant. *These points were not at all disputed.* The debate then was, as stated above, *whether Gentiles had equal rights with the Jews to the blessings of the covenant.*

In Gal. 3: 7, the Apostle thus speaks, "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham?" These words are too plain to need comment.

In the same chapter, verse 17, are these words, "And

this I say, that the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, that it should make the *promise* of none effect." The Apostle here seems to express this idea, that the receiving of the law from Sinai was not the completion of the covenant with Abraham ; but that that covenant looked forward immediately to the gospel and its blessings.

In verses 13, 14, are these words, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; (for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree ;) that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." In these words it is plainly stated, that those spiritual blessings enjoyed by Abraham and all the pious Jews, had been likewise bestowed upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. But these blessings were promised to Abraham, and enjoyed by him in the way of covenant. It was in this way, also, that all the pious Jews contemplated them. Certainly, then, the covenant and all its blessings were bestowed upon the Gentiles by Jesus Christ ; and if upon them, upon all *believers* to the end of time.

Thus have we shown, in establishing the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant—First. That the principles of that covenant are such, that if man enters into covenant with God at all, he must do so according to this covenant.

Secondly. That there was much wisdom and propriety in God's revealing to Abraham first, the form and seal of this covenant ; since he was the first introduced into the church in its more embodied state.

Thirdly. That the Scriptures do positively declare, that the covenant into which believers enter with God now, is the same as that into which they entered with him in the former dispensation.

Fourthly. That since the covenant of Abraham referred to Christ, and all believers are *in* Christ, that covenant must also embrace all believers likewise.

Fifthly. We have also adduced many plain and satisfactory texts of Scripture, to prove that the Abrahamic covenant includes in it every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, to the end of time.

Now, if such be the extent of this covenant, the propriety of terming it a *general* covenant is at once apparent.

Thus have we shown, that the covenant of works ; of redemption ; that made with Noah ; and that of Abraham ; are all of them general covenants—far more so than any others to found in the Word of God.

LECTURE IX.

THE FOUR COVENANTS—THEIR SEALS.

It is of essential importance, both to the demands of justice and the peace of communities, that all bargains, trades, agreements, &c. among men, should be clearly defined and satisfactorily confirmed between the parties thus trading or agreeing. The necessity of this lies in the very nature of things. The human mind is not only incapable of always remembering the various stipulations of trade, but the human heart is treacherous, and much disposed to lay upon old contracts new and different constructions. And besides this, man being a corporeal as well as an intellectual creature, needs something to address his senses as well as his mind. From these considerations, has sprung the practice of defining and confirming contracts, by signs, ceremonies, witnesses, notes, bonds and other legal instruments. We are assured in the Scriptures, that this practice arose at a very early period; it probably was coeval with trade itself. Nor would it be confined to contracts between men among themselves. It would also extend to those covenants, promises, &c. which God should make with men. For as God always

addresses himself to his creatures, in a way which they can understand, he would not only use the language of their words, but likewise that of their *actions*.

With the exception of those transactions which took place between God and our first parents in Eden, (which we omit for the present,) the first instance recorded of the confirmation of an agreement, or rather promise, occurred in reference to Cain. After the denunciations made by God himself against this first murderer, in a mutinous or despondent spirit, he seemed to extend the threatening to the destruction of his life: "And it shall come to pass," says he, "that every one that findeth me shall slay me." In order to remove these apprehensions, God declares to him, "Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold." And in order to confirm the confidence of Cain in this declaration, it is said, "*And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*" Gen. 4: 14, 14. Dr. Shuckford renders it thus, "And God gave or appointed a *sign* or *token* (to assure him) that no one should kill him." Whether this sign or mark were attached to the person of Cain, or something foreign to himself, the design of it certainly was to produce in his mind reliance upon the divine word. It was, therefore, a token of God's covenant with Cain.

The second instance of such a practice mentioned in the Scriptures, is also of divine appointment. This is to be found in Gen. 9: 13, where God addresses Noah thus, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a *token* of a covenant between me and the earth."

We find the next sign of an agreement or promise

mentioned in chapter 15: 9—18. After God had given to Abram promise of the land of Canaan, Abram addresses God thus, “Whereby shall I *know* that I shall inherit it?” To this God replies thus, “Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove and a young pigeon.” After Abram had taken and arranged them, and when it was dark, it is said, “Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, passed between the pieces.” And, “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” These animals and birds, together with the accompanying ceremonies, were appointed by God, as a token of his promise to give Abraham and his posterity the land of Canaan.

The next sign or seal mentioned is in the 17th chapter, where circumcision was constituted the token of the Abrahamic covenant.

In Gen. 21: 27—31, is the next instance recorded of these confirmatory evidences of agreement. It is there said, “And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, what mean these seven ewe lambs, which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, for these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be *a witness* unto me that I *have digged this well*. Wherefore he called that place Beer-Sheba; because there they *swore* both of them.” In this case, *oaths*, together with an *exchange of animals*, as kind

of hostages, were the *signs* or testimonials of the league formed between Abraham and Abimelech.

The next instance of confirmation is annexed to the blessing which God pronounced upon Abraham, when he was called to offer up his son Isaac. It is expressed thus in the form of an oath. “By myself have I *sworn*, saith the Lord ; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing I will bless thee,” &c. Gen. 22: 16, 17.

The next instance of this sort is mentioned in chapter 23: 16—18. It is thus expressed, “And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham *weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.* And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, *were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.*” In this case living witnesses were employed to confirm the trade.

The next instance is where Eliezer, Abraham’s steward, was sent to seek a wife for Isaac. The words in which this transaction is related, are as follow : “And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh ; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell : but thou shalt go unto

my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." chap. 24: 2—4. An oath, with the additional ceremony of putting the hand under the thigh, was the confirmation of this agreement.

When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, he also confirmed the trade by *an oath*. chap. 25: 33. The covenant or agreement between Isaac and Abimelech was also ratified by *mutual swearing*. chap. 26: 31.

In Gen. 28: 20—22, is recorded a transaction somewhat different from the preceding, but confirmed also by a *sign*. The transaction alluded to is the vow of Jacob, the morning after the night he spent in the fields of Padan-Aram. The words are these, "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and *this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house*: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." The pillar which Jacob thus set up became the *token* of his vow.

Another instance of agreements confirmed by sensible things and ceremonies, is recorded in chap. 31: 44—55. In these verses are specified the stipulations of the covenant which was made between Jacob and Laban his father-in-law. The sign or evidence of this league was a heap of stones. It is said, "And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, gather stones; and they took stones and made a heap; and they did eat there upon the heap." "And Laban said, *this*

heap is a witness between me and thee this day." "And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac."

Another instance of confirmed agreements is to be found in chap. 38: 18, where Tamar is represented as asking of Judah, her father-in-law, the following pledges: viz. his "*signet, bracelets, and staff.*" This is the first instance of a *signet* any where spoken of; though it is highly probable they were quite common in those days. These were, probably, used then, as they have been since, to make an impression upon wax, or on some soft substance, by which the owner's consent or sanction is given to any particular deed.

The last instance which we shall adduce on this subject, is to be found in Gen. 41: 41, 42—"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, see, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." By placing his ring upon the hand of Joseph, Pharaoh thus delegated to him his entire authority.

From these several instances, all taken from the oldest book in the world, it will appear evident, that the practice of accompanying bargains, trades, covenants and promises, with certain signs and ceremonies, in order to render them more explicit and binding, has existed from the very earliest ages. The probability is, that no trade or agreement, of any importance whatever, was ever unaccompanied by them. This was a matter of absolute necessity; for, where one party subsequently disagreed with the original terms, or was dishonest in their observ-

ance, the only recourse of the other was, to the signs, oaths, witnesses, or evidences, by which the agreement had been at first confirmed.

It is also to be observed, that whenever God should enter into covenant with man, or should make to him some important promise, the very customs of the country, which may be regarded but as the mute language of society, would render it necessary that such covenants or promises should have their proper authentication. If they were not thus authenticated and confirmed, the mere ordinary trades and bargains of common life would have better evidence than they. And, again; since writing was not invented during the earliest periods of society; and, since there was no plain and legible revelation of the divine will to man, such signs and ceremonies accompanying the covenants and promises of God, were rendered even more necessary than at a remote period. In perfect conformity to these observations, we find it to be true, in point of fact, that the first signs given in attestation of agreements and promises, were given by God himself.

II. Having made these remarks, as to the nature and use of signs, seals, and the various evidences of trade employed in early ages, I now proceed to *specify the seals of the four covenants, spoken of in the last lecture.*

I. The first of these was the covenant of works. Of this covenant, we assert, that the tree of life was the seal.

1. Our first remark here is, that some seal was absolutely necessary, as an accompaniment of this covenant. Though innocent, yet man was corporeal. His senses were a powerful medium through which to impress his

mind. The senses of our first parents, too, were more likely to be strongly impressed than those of any of their posterity. They had just been created. The world around them was new—every thing wore a glowing and captivating aspect. Under these circumstances, the various objects of sensation must have exerted a powerful influence over them. That God, therefore, in controlling and instructing man, should have selected his senses as a means of thus controlling and instructing him, was not only natural, but necessary. If he had left his senses unguarded, and hence permitted temptation to assail him, especially to assail him through this channel, his fall must have been inevitable. The fact, then, that mere sensation must have exerted so powerful an influence over our first parents, proves, that God must have addressed them through this medium. Again, that special state of trial in which man was placed, rendered this even more necessary. This arises, in the first place, from the great importance of the covenant into which man entered in his probation. Upon his obedience in this covenant, was suspended not only his own life, but the lives of all his posterity. No situation could possibly be more solemn than that of Adam during his state of trial. Now, it is not to be supposed, that, under such solemn circumstances, God should not employ his senses in order to uphold his obedience. The very importance, therefore, of the covenant made with Adam proves, that God must have used, in so solemn a transaction, some *sensible sign*, in order to impress obedience upon man, and to awaken in him a proper desire after the blessings promised. And, in the second place, as the test of his obedience, or the

thing forbidden was a *sensible object*, it was also necessary that the blessings promised should be exhibited by a *sensible object*. If this had not been the case, then man would have been placed under such circumstances, that the temptation to disobey would have been stronger than the allurements to obedience. The forbidden tree would perpetually be spreading out its enchantments to his senses, while from no other quarter would there be a counteracting influence. Under these circumstances, his liability to fall would have been exceeding strong, from the very situation in which he was placed. We must suppose, therefore, that there was in Eden some *sensible object*, designed to counteract the enticements of the prohibited tree; and, certainly, no one could better have suited this purpose, than another tree equally fair and inviting. But this could be no other than the tree of life.

2. Another remark I here make is, that the tree of life was a very fit and natural seal of the covenant of works. Adam was now in a most delightful garden. His occupation was to till the ground, and to subsist by its abundant and easy productions. Trees of rich and various fruits were all around him. A tree was, therefore, one of the most *obvious* objects in the garden. It would, therefore, seem to suggest itself for a sign or witness on any special occasion. Besides, being ever near him, it would best exhibit the terms of the covenant of probation—its “still small voice” would be continually addressing him. Another reason of fitness in this tree was, that as man was sustained as to his corporeal life by the fruits of the garden, so a rich fruit tree would be a most excellent

and natural type of spiritual life. Now, that God would select an object, as the seal of this covenant, that bore some resemblance to the blessings promised, in preference to one which had no such resemblance, is certain. Again, as stated above, there was much fitness in constituting the tree of life, or some tree, a seal of this covenant, since the thing forbidden was a tree. In every view of it, therefore, the tree of life was a fit and natural seal to the covenant of works.

3. The specification of this tree proves it to have been a seal of the covenant. "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food : *the tree of life also in the midst of the garden*, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Gen. 2: 9. Now in this description of the trees in Paradise, Moses specifies two in particular, "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Why should he exhibit these so prominently, unless there were special reasons for his doing so? As to the latter, the reason for its being made thus prominent is evident. It was concerning it, he informs us, the Lord said to Adam, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it." verse 17. But why should the "tree of life" be also specified? The only possible answer is, that it was a sign of evidence of that life which God had promised to Adam in case of obedience. Especially is this clear when it is remembered, that its specification is mentioned along with that of the prohibited tree. The very specification, therefore, of this tree proves it to be a seal of the covenant made with Adam.

4. Its name also proves the same thing. This tree

was called the “tree of life.” Now, although in these days most names are arbitrary, yet it was not so in the earliest stages of society. In these early periods, there was always some peculiar quality or incident that determined the name of an object. The fact, therefore, that this tree bore the name it did, proves, that either there must have been in it some particular property affording life, or that it was the pledge and evidence of life, which God had promised to man. Of this, too, the evidence is certain : because it is said in verse 22 of the 3d chapter, “Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” This tree, then, was not only associated in some way with life, but with *eternal life*. Now it is certain, that although its fruit might in a natural way sustain corporeal life ; yet neither it, nor any part of the tree, could have the property of yielding *eternal life*. The eternal life therefore, alluded to in the appellation of this tree, was the *eternal life promised in case of Adam’s obedience*. But if this be so, the tree of life was a seal of that promise, i. e. of the covenant.

5. Not only the name, but the history of this tree proves it to have been such seal. In Gen. 2: 9, it is said, that the “tree of life was in the midst of the garden.” In 3: 3, it is said, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was also in the midst of the garden.” These two trees, in all probability, were near each other. And as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was that to which was appended the *threatening of death*, so the tree of life must also have been that with which was connected the *promise of life*. Thus, though near together, did they stand in opposition against each other.

Again in chap. 3: 22—24, are these words, “And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” The meaning of these words is evidently the following : God, foreseeing that man, after his fall, would seek that life in a *tree* which he could only find in the *promised Saviour*, drove him from the garden, and prevented him altogether from ever returning to it so long as there was danger of his falling into this mistake. At the fall the tree of life ceased to be a pledge of the covenant—it was no longer a sacrament—it could, therefore, have been of no benefit to man to partake of its fruit, in the vain hope of obtaining a *life* which he had forfeited, and which could only be found in Christ. Besides, it would have been sacrilege for him to have partaken of this tree after his fall. He was to eat of it only while obedient—after transgression, *it* too, became a forbidden tree. Again, in Rev. 2: 7. 22: 2—14, the Apostle, using figurative language, represents the tree of life as growing in the midst of the celestial paradise, or heaven. By this we are to understand, that those blessings which were originally *sealed* by the tree of life in Eden, but were lost by our first parents, have been recovered for man through a Saviour, and are now reserved for him in heaven. The tree of life blooms now, not in the terrestrial, but in the

celestial paradise ; and it offers life, not as the result of personal obedience, but as the purchase of a Saviour's death. The history of this tree, then, as contained in the Scriptures, does most certainly demonstrate that it was *the seal of the covenant of works*.

From these several considerations it is evident, that the tree of life could have no proper meaning or use at all, unless it were employed for the purpose above specified.

II. The second covenant was that of redemption, made between the Father and the Son. Of this covenant we assert, that sacrifice was originally the seal.

I. Our first argument is, that it was absolutely necessary, that the announcement of this covenant to man should be accompanied with some confirming proof. So far as the Persons themselves covenanting are concerned, of course no witness or evidence of any kind could be needed. A simple agreement or determination, on the part of the Father and the Son, would have been sufficient confirmation of this transaction. But when this transaction, which took place between the Father and Son in eternity, was proclaimed to man in time, it was essential that *some sensible and defined sign or evidence* should have attended its disclosure. A mere appeal to his understanding, by *words*, could never have produced such firmness of confidence in his mind, as if those words had been accompanied by some *sensible object*. The peculiar situation of man after the fall, would render this even more necessary. He was now guilty. His sins weighed heavily upon his soul. His dejection under these circumstances must have been inexpressibly great. Certainly he needed something more than *words* to disperse his

gloom and give him confidence in a Saviour. Besides, as the words in which a deliverer was made known to him, must have been obscure, his situation *absolutely demanded* some *sign* by which his faith might be directed to the promised Seed. These words were the following, “And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; *and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*” Gen. 3: 14, 15. Now, when we consider the obscurity of these words, arising from the language itself, from Adam’s entire ignorance of the deliverer promised, and their being addressed to the serpent; when we consider this obscurity, I say, we must admit, that, besides this *verbal declaration*, God did give to our first parents some *significant sign*, both as its explanation and seal.

This will appear the more evident, when we remember that the only solace our progenitors had, as a compensation for the loss of paradise and of innocence, was in this *obscure promise*, and that *faith* in it, or rather in the object of it, was essential to their salvation. Certainly, as God was offering to man deliverance from impending ruin, he would make that deliverance at least so plain that he could perceive and embrace it; and, as we can hardly say this was done in any words addressed to our first parents, of which we have any knowledge, we are bound to believe it was done by the *institution of sacrifice, as a sign and seal of the promise of a Saviour*. I say, we are bound to

believe that such instruction and confidence were afforded man *by the institution of sacrifice*, because there was no other sign given of which we have any knowledge. Nor will it refute this to say, that sacrifice was given to man as a *type*, and not as a *seal*. The object of a type is *instruction*; but the object of that instruction is the production of *confidence* in that which the type represents, so that if we consider sacrifice as a type, still it was a seal; since its design was to fix the faith of man in the promise of a Saviour. On this subject, Augustin, as quoted by Calvin, observes, "*If the sacraments had not some similitude to those things of which they are sacraments, they would be no sacraments at all.*" vol. iii. p. 411. The very fact, therefore, that there is to the eye of faith a *likeness* between an animal burning on an altar, and Christ dying on the cross, shows that the former would be a fit *seal* or evidence of the latter.

2. The second argument I employ on this subject is, that sacrifices, having their origin with the first promise of the Messiah, must have been designed originally as a *proof* or *seal* of his coming and death. That sacrifices originated with the first promise of a Saviour, and therefore in the family of Adam, is evident from several considerations.

First. If they did not originate at that time, then would our first parents have had no sensible sign, at all, to assist them in their religious devotions and hopes. The garden of Eden no longer bloomed around them. The two trees in that garden, especially, had ceased for ever to admonish and instruct. The Sabbath was the only institution to remind them of religion, and to strengthen their confidence in God. Under these circumstances, it was almost im-

possible that any thing like pure religion could have been maintained, even in the family of the first patriarch of mankind. Adam and his companion, therefore, absolutely needed some *sensible religious institution*; and as we know of none but sacrifice which he could with propriety be supposed to have enjoyed, sacrifice was such institution.

Secondly. An institution of this sort was absolutely necessary to propagate the true religion in those early times. This religion, as we have seen, embraced in it the *promise of a Saviour*. Now if this religion, together with such promised deliverance, were designed to have been transmitted by *mere words*, it is absolutely certain that it could not have been long maintained. The promise of a Saviour, especially, would soon have been forgotten, through that self-righteous spirit which has existed in man ever since the fall. Opposed in heart to salvation through the righteousness of another, man would soon have rejected and forgotten mediatorial deliverance, had not such deliverance been impressed upon them by *some definite and appropriate sign*. If it was designed, therefore, to transmit the promise of a Saviour in early times, such promise must have been accompanied with its proper and confirmatory seal.

Thirdly. The evidence afforded by the Scriptures themselves on this subject, is perfectly satisfactory.

Directly after the annunciation of a Saviour, it is said, “unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Gen. 3: 21. This transaction took place in paradise; for it is *subsequently* said, that God drove them out of that place. That the skins here spoken of were the skins of animals, none will deny;

and that these animals were offered *in sacrifice*, is certain, from several reasons. The first is, that it was at this time not allowed to man to eat animals of any kind. Gen. 1: 29, 30, compared with 9: 3. Now, it is certain, that if animals were *really slain*, but yet were prohibited from being eaten, the object for slaying them was of a religious nature. But the only object of such a nature, that could have existed in Eden, was the confirmation of the faith of man in the promise of a Saviour. The text, therefore, above quoted, certainly declares, that religious sacrifices had their origin in the garden of Eden. Again, we remember, that it was customary, in offering sacrifice, to flay the animal; and for the priest who officiated to take the skin to himself; the evidence on this subject becomes even clearer. In Lev. 7: 8, are these words, “And the priest that offereth any man’s burnt-offering, even the priest, *shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered.*” Now, in reference to the sacrifices offered in Eden, Adam was the priest, the skin therefore fell to him by right. Hence the propriety of his using them for clothing. The very fact, too, that it is said, “the Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them,” seems to declare that God then appointed sacrifices; for we certainly cannot understand that God actually and literally either “made coats, or clothed” our first parents. Here God is said to do, what he permitted or appointed to be done. The meaning seems to be, that God, by appointing sacrifices, thus ordained the method through which our progenitors were clothed.

Again, we find directly afterwards, Cain and Abel bringing offerings to the Lord. Now, it is certain that

man did not institute such offerings. It would have been presumption in the highest degree, for him to have done so; nor would God have accepted such sacrifices. God, therefore, was the author of this institution. He had, too, appointed it before the days of Cain and Abel,—that is, he gave it to Adam. But what time was so proper for him to have given such an institution to our first parents, as when they were just about to leave Eden, had just received the promise of a Saviour, and were thus suspended between hope and despair? It is, therefore, evident beyond all doubt, that the institution of sacrifice originated with the first promise of a Saviour, and that it was given to Adam just at that precise period.

Now, if this be so; and if, as we have shown in the first part of this Lecture, such signs were, in those early ages, always given for *confirmation or evidence*; then it follows irresistibly, that sacrifice was given to Adam as a *seal or pledge, on the part of God, of a coming and promised Messiah; i. e. of the covenant of redemption.*

3. Our third argument on this subject is, that the institution of sacrifice was *appropriate* as a seal for the covenant of redemption.

In order to understand this fully, it will be necessary for us to glance at the early history of this institution. As to those offered in the garden of Eden, it is evident that they were animals; for it is said that God clothed our first parents with their skins. The next notice of sacrifice is mentioned in Gen. 4: 3, 4, where it is stated, that “Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.” One of these offerings was bloody,

the other was dry. The result was also different. God respected the one, the other he refused. Now, although the spirit of Cain seems to have been different from that of Abel, yet it appears to me, that the divine indifference to the offering of Cain, referred not only to the spirit which prompted this act, but to the character of the offering itself. It was probably his impiety which caused him to have selected such a sacrifice. Instead, therefore, of its being acceptable to God, it met but with his abhorrence.

The next instance of sacrificial offerings is in Gen. 8. 20, "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor," &c. The victims here offered were *clean beasts*, both quadrupeds and fowls, and the mode of offering was by *burning*. As this was the same institution as that given to Adam, it is therefore evident that *holocausts*, or *burnt-offerings*, was the original mode of sacrifice.

The whole form of sacrificing is particularized in chap. 22: 9, 10, "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham *built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.*"

It is also evident, that besides prayer and thanksgiving, (see Gen. 12: 8. 13: 4,) which were usually performed around the altar on which the victim was sacrificed, that feasts were likewise celebrated, and libations poured out. In chap. 31: 54, it is said, "Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren *to eat bread*: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount."

Again, in chap. 35: 14, it is stated, “And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone; *and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.*” The drink-offering here alluded to, was probably wine. See chap. 14: 18. In Ex. 18: 12, are these words, “And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took *a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.*”

From these sketches, it seems evident, that the burning of animals was the original mode of sacrifice,—that animals offered were select,—that worship of various kinds were performed during the burning of the victim,—that libations, and probably fruits, were also connected with the burnt-offerings,—and that feasts were celebrated, or bread eaten, at the same time. It is also likely, that although the victim sacrificed may not have been eaten, yet that the flesh of other animals was eaten, and also that wine was drunk during these services.

Having thus considered the usages in reference to sacrifice in early times, we now proceed to show its appropriateness to be a confirmation of the covenant of redemption. Its appropriateness consisted, in the first place, in the fact, that animals were offered. By the offering up of *an animal*, was exhibited both the *incarnation* and *substitution* of Christ. Again, it was appropriate, because this animal was *select*. This denoted the holiness and sufficiency of the great Sacrifice. It was also appropriate, because it was brought alive to the altar, and there slain. This exhibited the willingness of the Saviour to die, and the fact that his death was to be one of violence. The

flesh and blood of the victim also portrayed and prefigured the flesh and blood of the great Substitute; and the fire which consumed the animal, was but an apt emblem of divine wrath, which fell upon the Redeemer in the room of sinners. From these observations, it is evident that nothing could more significantly impress upon the mind of man formerly the atonement of Christ, than the institution of sacrifice. Its very adaptedness to the purpose, then, declares that sacrifice was a seal of the covenant of redemption.

4. Another argument we adduce on this subject is, that in Rev. 13: 8, Christ is there called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It very frequently happens in the Scriptures, that the spiritual signification of a sign is designated by the sign itself, and the contrary. Thus it is said of the paschal lamb, "It is the Lord's Pass-over;" Ex. 12: 11; of the rock from which the waters issued in the desert, "that rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10: 4. And thus the Saviour says of the elements in the supper, "this is my body," and "this is my blood." Matt. 26: 26, 28. Now, by Christ being called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," we surely must understand that he was *symbolically* thus slain. The *sign*, therefore, by which his actual death was thus prefigured, was a *proof* or *pledge* of that death. It was a preceding confirmation of it. The victim by which the Saviour's death was thus prefigured and confirmed, and which in this Scripture is figuratively represented as Christ himself, was a *seal of God's promise as to that event*; i. e. it was a seal of the covenant of redemption.

5. The faith which Abel exercised upon the great pro-

pituitary sacrifice, through the offerings which he made to God, is likewise an evidence of this truth. “By faith,” says the Apostle, “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.” Heb. 11: 4. The institution of sacrifice unquestionably was, to this patriarch, a confirmation or seal of the promise made to Adam as to a coming Saviour. He saw in the victims he sacrificed, the fulfillment of that promise,—the future Deliverer pouring out his soul in death for his sins. He saw in them the *proof* of a covenant of mercy. His faith, therefore, embraced that covenant, and he was accounted righteous before God.

Thus evident is it, that the institution of sacrifice was a seal of that covenant of grace entered into between the Father and Son, for the salvation of man. It was the *proof or evidence of the existence of such a covenant*, and the *confirmation of those promises which related to a future Saviour*. Against all this there is one objection, viz. that no covenant of redemption is spoken of in God’s intercourse with Adam; nor is the institution of sacrifice called a *seal* or token of any covenant, or agreement, or promise whatever. The answer to this is simply the following: that as God must always employ the language and customs of men in the communication of his will to them, and as neither covenants nor seals of any sort existed at this time, so we could not possibly expect that God should speak either of covenants or seals, in his transactions with Adam. It is not the object of revelation to make for us vocabularies, dictionaries, or grammars. Its great design is, by the use of such language, modes of speech, and customs as

exist among men, to communicate to them, in an intelligible form, that *truth* which is connected with their duty and happiness. As, therefore, trade had not commenced whilst Adam was yet in Eden, and consequently the practice of confirming contracts by sensible signs had not as yet begun, it would have been strange and unnatural that God should have spoken of *covenants* and *tokens*, when Adam could not have understood, without an interpretation, what his divine Teacher meant. As, therefore, God is said to have brought all the animals and fowls to Adam to see what he would name them, so we may say of the covenants and seals that originated, or were revealed, in Eden, that God showed men *actions*, and then whatever men should call them, were the names thereof. And from what we have already shown, it is unquestionably true, that by whatever other names men may please to call the tree of life and the institution of sacrifice, yet were they the seals, severally, of the covenants of works and of redemption.

III. and IV. Of the covenant formed with Noah, the rainbow was the seal; and of that formed with Abraham, circumcision was the seal. The truth in these cases is so clearly revealed as to admit of no doubt, and therefore to require no proof. I would simply remark, that both in these instances, as well as in the two preceding, the seals of these covenants seem by no means to have been arbitrarily constituted, but to have been selected with special reference to propriety of signification.

III. The third observation which we make in reference to these covenants and seals is, that seals must be attached to the covenants as long as they themselves exist; and

that if not changed by divine authority, the same seals originally attached to them must be attached to them still.

1. The first remark which I here make is, that the very same reasons which first affixed seals to these covenants, would continue them until the covenants themselves should cease. Whether it was designed to confirm, define, or illustrate these covenants, or to impress their substance upon the human mind, by these seals, in either case, or in all, it would be necessary that they should be perpetuated. For these objects would not only be important the first moment that these covenants existed; but as long as they should exist. Mere length of time could never diminish their importance in the least.

2. A second remark I make is, that the seals would be just as necessary to the remotest generations of men as to the earliest. Though these remote generations enjoy more historical light, yet are they creatures of sense. They need something to impress their senses. And, it may be, that were not sensible signs granted them, even the plain revelations they enjoy might become so insipid as but to increase their guilt. Besides, there are in every age persons who cannot read—who are but little interested in ordinary modes of instruction—to such persons, sensible signs accompanying the offers of salvation would be of vital importance.

3. Another remark I make is, that for the seal not to accompany the covenant, proves, beyond all doubt, that the covenant itself does not exist. The seal is the confirmation and proof of the covenant. If, therefore, the seal be withdrawn, the covenant also must have ceased. If the edict of a sovereign were passing through the realm,

but should happen by some means to be divested of the royal stamp or seal, of what possible value would the mere writing subsequently be? And, if the name of a certain debtor had been, in some way, erased from the note or bond he had given his creditor, of what possible advantage would the mere unauthenticated note or bond be afterwards? Just so, if these covenants should, at any time previously to their final accomplishment, be deprived of their seals, they would immediately be null and void. The seals, therefore, must be perpetuated in order to prove the existence and nature of the covenants to which they are attached.

As to the seal of the covenant of works, it vanished with the covenant itself. The fall of man destroyed them both. Thus have we seen, that after the transgression, our first parents were debarred access to the tree of life. It had then ceased to be a sacramental pledge.

That the seal of the covenant with Noah still exists, we often have pleasing evidence in the expanded bow upon the clouds. We also have the promise of God that it shall be perpetuated to the end of time. In reference, therefore, to two of the four general covenants treated of, there can be no debate as to the fact, that the seal lasted or will last to the termination of the covenant. Now, surely, there is no peculiar reason, in either of these cases, which can render them different from the two remaining covenants still to be noticed. I therefore proceed to show, that the covenant of redemption and that of Abraham, still have among us their appropriate seals.

1. The covenant of redemption still has its seal.

First. The covenant itself still exists—of this fact none

will doubt. It had a seal originally. This fact has been, we hope, clearly proven. Now, if the covenant still exist, and if it has once had a seal, it must inevitably have a seal still. Otherwise it is but null and void.

Secondly. There is in the church now, in point of fact, an ordinance of divine appointment, which, in itself, is an appropriate seal, which bears a striking analogy to the original seal; and which was instituted at the very instant the other seal was removed. This ordinance is the Lord's Supper. That this institution is of divine appointment, none will deny who believe the Scriptures. That it is an appropriate seal of the covenant of redemption is also evident. Christ at its institution settled this fact for ever. "Take eat," said he, alluding to the bread, "this is my body broken for sin:" and again of the wine he said, "this is my blood." Now, certainly, the Saviour never would have selected as a seal of that covenant, in compliance with whose stipulations he was put to shame and death, a sign which was inappropriate. It is also obvious to any one, that bread broken is an apt similitude of Christ's broken body; and that wine poured out bears a strong resemblance to his shed blood. It is also evident, that both the qualities of the bread and the wine, as well as the fact, that they are participated in by the professing church, are beautifully significant of the spiritual things intended by this ordinance. This institution is then an appropriate seal of the covenant of redemption—the sum and substance of which is Christ's dying for sinners.

This ordinance also bears a striking resemblance to the original seal. The original seal consisted chiefly of

two parts, flesh and blood. This also has two parts, bread and wine ; and, besides, as we have shown, both bread and wine were very early associated with burnt-offerings. The supper, therefore, while it bears a striking resemblance in its elements to the victim originally offered, may also be regarded but as the *secondary part* of the sacrifice itself. The resemblance, then, between the present ordinance and the original seal is close and intimate.

But this ordinance was instituted at the very moment of time that the other seal was removed. Its origin is thus described, “And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them : and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. *And as they were eating*, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples ; and said, Take eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it : for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matt. 26: 20, 21 ; 26—28. That the Lord’s Supper, then, had its origin *at the very table* upon which the Passover was celebrated ; and that the elements employed in the celebration of the Passover, with the exception of the lamb, were the very elements with which the supper was first kept ; is a plain matter of fact. The only question which can arise here is, whether the Passover was a sacrifice—and, therefore, the original seal of the covenant. In answer to this, I will quote the words of Moses himself, at the institution of the Passover—“And it shall come to pass,” says he, “when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service ? that ye shall say, It is *the sacrifice* of the

Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Ex. 12: 26, 27. Again, what is said of the paschal lamb in Ex. 12: 46, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof," in John 19: 36, is applied to Christ. And again, in 1 Cor. 5: 7, the Apostle uses these words, "For even Christ our Passover has been *sacrificed* for us." The Passover, then, although it had some things peculiar to itself, was nevertheless a sacrifice. It was but one mode of this institution. The very instant, therefore, that the former seal was removed, was the Lord's Supper instituted. All these things taken together, therefore, demonstrate beyond all rational doubt, that the supper now, is what sacrifice originally was—a *seal* of the covenant of redemption.

2. I observe also, that the covenant made with Abraham, i. e. the covenant of Christian profession, also has its seal at the present time.

First. The covenant, as we have shown, still exists. It once had a seal. Of course its very existence now proves that it must still have a seal.

Secondly. There is in the church at present an ordinance, which is unquestionably of divine appointment, which is in itself an appropriate seal, which bears an affinity to the original seal; and which was introduced about the time the other seal was withdrawn. This ordinance is Baptism. That it is of divine appointment none will deny. It is also an appropriate seal. It expresses the purity of those who enter into covenant with God, i. e. it designates the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." It also bears an affinity to the original seal. In proof of this, I

will here only mention two reasons : first, that as circumcision rendered the Jews a peculiar people ; so baptism renders the professing church now-a-days a peculiar people. The other reason is, that the Apostle Paul represents them in Col. 2: 11, 12, as having precisely the same import. His words are, “ In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ ; buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Baptism was also instituted about the time that circumcision was withdrawn. All these circumstances abundantly prove, that baptism is now, what circumcision was formerly, a *seal of the Abrahamic covenant, or of the covenant of Christian profession.*

The above arguments have, we hope, conclusively settled two important points, viz.

First. That the Lord's Supper and the Institution of Sacrifice are the same ordinance, i. e. seals of the same great covenant.

Secondly. That Baptism and Circumcision are also the same ordinance, i. e. the seals of the very same general covenant.

LECTURE X.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

ALTHOUGH the identity of these institutions has already been established, on a ground too strong, as we believe, for successful opposition, yet it will throw additional light on the subject, to trace out, minutely, the similarity between them.

I. The first point of likeness between them to be noticed is, that they are both of divine appointment. In reference to the former, it is said, "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs

be circumcised : and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. 17: 9—14. In reference to the latter, it is thus said, " And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying ; All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28: 18—20.

The first remark I make, in reference to the origin of these two institutions, as above exhibited, is, that they were both given by the Lord Jesus Christ. As it respects the latter, baptism, the evidence is indubitable, for it is expressly said, " And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying," &c. And as it regards the former, circumcision, the testimony is also complete. In Gen. 17: 1, it is said, " The Lord appeared to Abram and said," &c. In chap. 18: 1, 2, it is said, " And the Lord appeared unto him ;" " and lo, three *men* stood by him," &c. From the subsequent history, it is certain that the one of these three, whom Abraham addressed as " My Lord," and to whom he made special prayer for Sodom, after the other two had left him, was the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also evident, that the person spoken of in this 18th chapter, is the same Divine Person who addressed Abraham in the 17th, and who appointed circumcision as a seal of his covenant. These two institutions or seals were, then, evidently given by Christ.

I would also observe, that they both embrace the same leading truths.

1. The introductory preface in each is similar. In the one, the Saviour says, "I am God Almighty;" in the other, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth."

2. Those to whom the seals were to be applied, were to be instructed, and to render obedience. In the one it is said, "Walk before me and be thou perfect;" and "Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations." In the other it is said, "Teach all nations;" and, "Teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you."

3. In each case, the blessings designated by the seals were to be spread. In the one it is said, "And thou shalt be a father of many nations;" and, "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." In the other, it is commanded, "Go, teach all nations; baptizing them," &c.

4. The divine promise is equally annexed to each. In the one it is said, "And I will be their God." In the other, "And lo, I am with you always."

5. Again, perpetuity is predicated of each. Of the one it is said, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, *for an everlasting covenant.*" Of the other, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

6. Lastly. The rejection of the terms, in either case, is connected with divine displeasure. Of the one it is said, "And the uncircumcised man child shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Of the other, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

II. These signs are also alike in their being but different seals of the same covenant. This truth has already been proven at length. I would only here observe, that there is a fitness, in the nature of things, for the two ordinances that have so long and so harmoniously coexisted in the church—Sacrifice and Circumcision ; or the Supper and Baptism. In considering the nature and import of them, it will be discovered, that circumcision or baptism refers immediately to the work and agency of the Spirit ; and that sacrifice or the supper, alludes immediately to the work of Christ, or to the atonement. The one holds forth the propitiatory offering ; the other exhibits the application of that offering to the heart and conscience. When the one had been abused by mankind generally, the other was instituted as a kind of hedge about it ;—to designate that peculiar people—the professing church—whose privilege it chiefly was, to feast around that altar, upon which the great sacrifice was smoking. If, too, in addition to this, we shall regard the Sabbath as the result more immediately of the Father's command, (for it was instituted before the fall of man,) then have we, in the very ordinances of the church, the exhibition of the ever blessed Trinity, both in their personalities and offices ; as they are exhibited, *without a figure*, in the Scriptures. It is, too, very possible, that these three ordinances, as they formerly existed, had considerable influence in impressing the doctrine of the Trinity upon the minds of ancient believers.

III. A third point of similarity between circumcision and baptism, consists in the fact, that they are both introductory into the church of Christ. *Precisely how far*

either of them introduced into the church, will be treated of elsewhere. We now speak of the general fact. That circumcision introduced into the Jewish community is evident; that baptism also introduces into the society of Christians will not be doubted. The only question of debate here is, *whether the Jewish community was the professing church!* Although this subject has been, in some degree, considered in treating of the identity of the church; yet, as it is of importance, we will here give it a more close investigation. Before doing this, however, it will be necessary to premise two things :

First. That the nationality of the Jewish religion does by no means prove, that that people were not the professing church. The precise *form* of church government, can never be considered as essential to the existence of the church. The criteria by which to test the existence of a church are never to be looked for in its peculiar form of administration. This form may be faulty; and it may even be dangerous; yet, until it destroys the truth and piety of those who have adopted it, are they to be considered as the professing church. The mode of church government at present is greatly varied. In some countries it is national; in others it is not: Among some denominations it is very arbitrary, among others loose and democratical. But certainly he would be regarded as presumptuous, who should attempt to prove, either, that the national church of England or Scotland; or that any of the several orthodox denominations of the United States, were not the professing church. If it were asked whether the Jewish church were not the nation—and whether the nation were not the church?—we should answer, unhesi-

tatingly, in the affirmative. But if it should be said, that since the nation was the church, therefore, there could have been no church among the Jews; from this we should dissent just as readily. *This unchurching of the Jewish people no more arises from the nationality of their church government, than the unchurching of any one Christian denomination, now-a-days, arises from its not being national.* If, then, we regard in England and Scotland, both churchmen and dissenters as equally belonging to the church; so must we regard, from the same reasons, both Jews and Christians as equally belonging to the church. We can just as well conceive of a nation's consenting to form a church; or rather of a *church growing up into a nation*; as we can conceive of a select number of persons all consenting to be governed by the same ecclesiastical discipline. The nationality, then, of the form of the Jewish church government, has nothing to do with the question—Was the Jewish community the church?

Secondly. I would also observe, that the fact that all the members of any one church are not the subjects of grace; or that there are a very large number who are not, does by no means prove that that religious community in which this is the case, is not the professing church. However desirable, yet it is probably something which has never or seldom been attained, that all the members of a church should be truly pious. The tares grow among the wheat, and the chaff is mixed with the true grain every where. If, then, there should be false professors in a church, it is but what is to be expected; and it can by no means be true, that wherever this is the case, the church in which these false professors are found, must necessarily be

spurious. According to this criterion of the existence of the church, it would be entirely destroyed. Whenever, therefore, it is said, that there were many impenitent sinners among the Jews, we admit the fact: but, still we deny the consequence, that because this was the fact, therefore, the Jewish people were not the professing church. There are many churches now which have very many false members—must we therefore deny them church existence? If so, “Tekel” would be written not upon one, but upon all our denominations. The fact, therefore, that all the Jews were not pious, or even that very many of them were very wicked; can, by no means, unchurch them as a religious community.

I now proceed to consider the direct evidence to support the proposition, that the Jewish people were the professing church in their day. “By the visible church,” says a late writer,* “is meant the body of those who *profess* the true religion, together with their children. It is that body which is called out of the world, and united under the authority of Christ, the Head, for the purpose of maintaining gospel truth and order, and promoting the knowledge, purity, comfort, and edification of all the members.” Now, if this definition be admitted, which, we think, must be, it will be very easy to show that the Jewish community was the professing, or visible church.

1. The Jews were a people called out from heathenism, and kept ever afterwards most strictly guarded against intercourse with idolaters. In Gen. 12: 1, it is said, “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy

* Dr. Miller,

country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Joshua, alluding to the ancestors of the Hebrews, speaks of "the gods which they served." It is, therefore, evident that God, seeing that the whole world was about to become a second time corrupt, in order to preserve his church, called Abraham away from surrounding wickedness, in order to make him, and his posterity, the depositories of his truth. The design, therefore, of the call of Abraham, and of his posterity, to the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, was to preserve the church by separating it from heathenism. This object is more fully stated in the subsequent history of this people. An instance of this sort we have in Deut. 7: 2—6, "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them (the heathen) before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; *thou shalt make no covenant with them;*" "*neither shalt thou make marriages with them.*" "But thus shall ye deal with them; *ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*" Now, certainly, no people could possibly be more completely separated from an idolatrous and ungodly world, than that people, to whom the language above was addressed.

2. The Jews were a people most solemnly in covenant with God. I shall not now repeat the Abrahamic covenant which was obligatory upon them all. I will but allude to two other occasions, when the whole nation of the Jews took upon them the covenant of God, in a manner as

solemn as we can well conceive. The first of these is found in Ex. 24: 6—8, “And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: *and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.*” The other instance is to be found in Deut. 29: 9—15. “Ye stand this day,” says Moses to Israel, “all of you, before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water: *That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God; as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us, this day, before the Lord our God; and also with him that is not here with us this day.*”

As to the *extent* of these sacred vows, in Deut. 26: 16—18, we have distinct information. Addressing Israel, Moses thus speaks, “This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them *with all thy heart and with all thy soul.* Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, *and to walk in his ways, and to keep his sta-*

tutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice ; and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments."

3. The Jewish people had a most exact ecclesiastical polity. To them were delivered the oracles of eternal truth. They had their high priest, their priests and their Levites. They had their tabernacle, or temple, and their altars. The various services of their religion were, too, most accurately defined by Jehovah himself. Their intercourse among themselves, and their conduct towards foreigners and strangers, were both the subjects of positive precepts. Among the Jews, religion pervaded every thing. It was diffused through their ordinary laws. It was acknowledged by their kings, and judges and warriors. It was the theme of the historians ; it filled the numbers of their poets, and furnished all the materials of their sages. There was no rank in life, no condition in society, that was not penetrated by this hallowing principle. Thus Moses could in truth say of Israel, "For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for ? And what nation is so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day." Deut. 4: 7, 8.

4. The institutions and truths delivered to the Jews were instrumental, under the Divine Spirit, of effecting the most illustrious saints on the records of the church. Where shall we find such faith as that of Abraham ? Where such uncompromising integrity as that of Joseph ? Where lived a holier or meeker statesman than Moses ? Where has

piety been found more fervent, more heavenly, and more sweet, than that of David? Who ever rolled from his tongue such burning numbers of the loftiest piety as Isaiah? Where have ever lived such kings, such judges, such heroes, such sages, such poets ;—such priests, such prophets, and, I may also add, such apostles and ministers, as among this wonderful people the Jews? Truly, instead of disputing whether they were in the church or not, we are compelled to give them the loftiest place. Ours are the humblest seats; theirs the most exalted. We have fallen into *their* goodly heritage; *they* were the *original proprietors*. Nor can it ever be regarded as an act of piety, to the “Seed of Abraham” and the “Son of David,” to unchurch that long line of patriarchs, and kings, and prophets, through whom Christ himself came.

5. The New Testament Scriptures every where recognize this fact. In Rom. 2: 28—29, it is said, “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Again in chap. 9: 4, 5, the Apostle uses these words, “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for ever.” And lest any should suppose the Apostle designed to say, that all the Jews were necessarily the subjects of grace, he goes on to state, “For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the

seed of Abraham are they all children"—6, 7. Again in chap. 11: 1, 2, the Apostle thus speaks, "I say then, hath God cast away *his people*? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." In Eph. 2: 14, are these words, "For he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." In this text, that separation between the Jews and Gentiles, which had existed for ages, is represented as having been broken down by Christ; the consequence of which was, *the Gentiles were admitted into the Jewish church and privileges*. The question, therefore, whether the Jews were in the church, is but equivalent to this, whether we ourselves are in the church?

Now, if the identity of the Jewish and Christian church be sufficiently proven, and if circumcision and baptism are respectively introductory into each, then is the similarity between these two ordinances themselves, clearly established.

IV. These ordinances are also alike in the fact, that they were neither designed to be *exclusively* confined to any one nation. That baptism was not, it will be admitted; for the command is, "Go teach *all* nations, baptizing them," &c. Nor was circumcision confined alone to the Jews. We find among the Jewish laws *express provision for the introduction of foreigners and strangers into their religious community*. In Ex. 12: 48, 49, are these words, "And when a *stranger* shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, *let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it: and he shall be as one that is born in the land*; for no uncircumcised

person shall eat thereof. *One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.*" According to this provision, we find that persons were very frequently introduced into the Jewish church, during their whole history. Thus Moses urged Hobab in the wilderness, to incorporate himself with Israel. Thus Rahab, and all her father's house, became identified with the Jews. The Gibeonites were also admitted to membership. Ruth, the Moabitess, not only became incorporated with Israel, but was one through whom, according to the flesh, Christ came. In the days of John Hyrcanus, all the Idumeans, or Edomites, received circumcision, and submitted to the Jewish religion and government. In the days of Christ, there were many proselytes to this system among the Jews. The Saviour also accused the Pharisees of compassing sea and land to make even one proselyte to their creed. Besides, in the Jewish temple there was a special part designated the court of the Gentiles, both spacious and commodious, where persons from all nations might worship.

The only difference, then, as to the design of these two ordinances, in this particular, is, that under the Christian dispensation we are commanded to "*Go* and teach all nations;" but among the Jews, converts to their religion, generally, *came* to them. In the one case, it is commanded not to reject applicants for membership from among the Gentiles; in the other, it is ordained, that such memberships should be positively sought. Still, however, both ordinances were designed to be accessible to persons from all nations. In this particular also, then, is there a similarity between circumcision and baptism.

V. These ordinances are also similar in requiring the profession of faith, previously to their being administered. That the administration of baptism required the profession of faith, is evident. "Go ye," says the Saviour, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark 16: 15, 16. In accordance with this, we find Philip declaring to the eunuch, that if he believed with all his heart he might be baptized; and upon his replying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," he was baptized. Acts 8: 3. So, also, when the jailor asked Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" the reply was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Chap. 16: 30, 31. But the profession of faith was also required in the administration of circumcision.

1. This is definitely expressed in the covenant itself, of which circumcision was the seal. In Gen. 17: 9, God is represented as speaking to Abraham, previously to the appointment of the seal, in the following manner: "*Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations.*" Then in the 11th verse he says, "*And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*" According, therefore, to these words, the covenant of God with Abraham, as expressed in the previous part of the chapter, was to be *kept*, that is, to be *known*, *accepted*, and *trusted in*, *previously* to the use and application of the sign. This also follows from the very nature of covenants and seals. The seal can in no case be properly applied, unless the covenant be understood and accepted. According, therefore, to the very covenant which God made

with Abraham, and through him with his posterity, the administration of circumcision always supposed the *previous* acceptance of that covenant of which it was the seal; that is, *it always required the profession of faith*. If it be asked, however, whether all of the Jews who were circumcised, or who administered circumcision to their children, were *truly believers*, I should reply in the negative. But to this I would subjoin, that multitudes, who have been *lawfully baptized*, have never given proper evidence of *evangelical belief*: so that, if *Jewish unbelievers* shall destroy the evangelical nature of circumcision, *Christian unbelievers* will also destroy the evangelical character of baptism.

2. The whole Jewish nation to whom circumcision was applied, professed faith. At the foot of Mount Sinai, in the plains of the Jordan, and in the borders of Canaan, they entered into the most solemn covenant with God. In Josh. 24: 16—18, after Joshua had delivered to all Israel, collected at Shechem, his farewell address, that nation are represented as replying thus, “And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: and the Lord drave out before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; therefore, *will we also serve the Lord, for he is our God.*” In the days of Josiah also, the Jews entered into public covenant with God, *or made a public profession of their faith.* “And

the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. *And all the people stood to the covenant.*" 2 Kings 23: 3. If, then, it be objected against the requisition of faith in the Jews, in order to circumcision, that this ordinance was of general application to them as a nation; our reply is, that the *profession of their faith was as general as the administration of this rite.*

3. The rejection of this nation was in consequence of their *unbelief*. In 2 Kings 17: 14, 15, 18, are these words, "Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not *believe* in the Lord their God. And they rejected their statutes, and *his covenant that he made with their fathers*, and his testimonies which he testified against them. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight." Also in Rom. 11: 20, the Apostle, speaking of the rejection of the Jews, says, "Because of unbelief they were broken off." Now, if the unbelief of the Jewish people was the reason of their disinheritorance, certainly, that covenant which God had made with them, which was the covenant of circumcision, *required the profession and the exercise of faith in all those who were properly admitted to its blessings.*

4. This truth is also evident, from the admission of strangers and foreigners to the rite of circumcision. Before such admission, it was always necessary that they should adopt the *creed* of the Jews; or, in other words, that

they should believe in the God of Israel, and consent to observe his laws and commandments. “If any person,” says Calvin, vol. iii. p. 371, “connected himself with the Israelites in religious communion, *it was necessary for him to be taught the covenant of the Lord, and instructed in the law, before he received circumcision.*” This opinion is not only supported by the very nature of the case, but by the plain language of Scripture. In Ex. 12: 48, are the following words, “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and wilt keep the passover of the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it.” Now, according to this text, a *desire to keep the Lord's passover* is represented as *preceding* circumcision, although circumcision was necessary in order to such celebration. But such desire involved in it the *exercise and profession of faith*. For how is it possible for one to have a *desire* to keep a feast of the Lord, without faith either in the Lord or in the feast itself? Again, such strangers were required to be circumcised. Now, as we have already shown, circumcision could in no case be *properly* administered, but with a knowledge of that covenant of which it was the seal, and with a *consent* to its terms. This is also confirmed by the fact, that in the days of the apostles, Timothy, who was the son of a Greek and a Jewess, could not be circumcised when an infant, because his father was *an unbeliever* in the Jewish religion. See Acts 16: 1—3.

5. This is plainly and positively asserted by the Apostle Paul. “*And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be*

the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also ; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4: 11, 12. Here the two following truths are clearly asserted.

First. That Abraham was in the exercise of *faith* when he received circumcision.

Secondly. That none of his descendants who did not receive circumcision *in faith*, were *spiritually* his children.

From all these considerations it is evident, that *faith* is no more connected with baptism than with circumcision. None but those who were *by profession* believers could possibly be circumcised. If, then, it be objected to the baptism of infants, that they are incapable of exercising faith, which is necessary to its administration ; we reply, that the objection, as urged against the circumcision of children in the Jewish church, is just as appropriate as it is when brought against the membership of children in the Christian church. If children now are incapable of exercising or professing faith ; children among the Jews were equally incapable of these acts. Yet, faith was just as necessary to the proper administration of circumcision, as it is to the proper administration of baptism.

There are two things, in reference to their first appointment, the proper consideration of which, is of great importance in comparing the two ordinances now under consideration. The first of these is, that circumcision was given to a *father* to be entailed upon his posterity ; and but gradually to embrace within it persons of other

nations. While, on the contrary, baptism was given to apostles, whose duty it was to preach the gospel and its ordinances. The other consideration is, that circumcision, though accessible by the heathen around, yet was not specially commanded to be preached to them ; while, on the contrary, the apostles were enjoined to “ go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Now, if we except from these institutions the two circumstances above, their perfect harmony, both as to their nature and design, will be manifest at once. The one seal was more confined ; the other more extended. But if we argue, that because circumcision was in a measure confined, therefore, it was not a spiritual ordinance ; from the very same ground we may argue, that the *gospel* among the Jews was not spiritual because it was confined. The fact is, that both circumcision and baptism *are the seals of the church*:—they can, therefore, extend no farther than the *professing church extends*. As that church embraced the whole Jewish nation formerly, together with different persons, and even communities from the Gentile world, incorporated with that nation, circumcision embraced that whole nation. And, at the present, as the church embraces various denominations of professing Christians, in different countries, baptism likewise extends to all these various denominations. Both institutions adhere to the church—*can go no farther, can stop no nigher*.

VI. These two ordinances are also alike in their signification.

I. They both imply the depravity and corruption of human nature. Baptism implies this. The very element used in the administration of baptism teaches clearly, that

the subject to whom the rite is applied, needs an *inward cleansing*. This is also included in what Peter says, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, *not the putting away the filth of the flesh.*" 1 Pet. 3: 21. This latter clause evidently implies, that there is *filth of heart* to be removed from man; the removal of which is signified by baptism. Circumcision also signified the pollution of human nature. Throughout the Scriptures, the phrase *to be circumcised*, is the same as *to be holy or sanctified*; and the words *uncircumcised* and *uncircumcision* convey the same meaning as the words *impure* and *uncleanness*. Thus Moses, excusing himself from his mission to Pharaoh, says, "How then shall Pharaoh hear me, *who am a man of uncircumcised lips?*" Ex. 6: 12. In order to understand this phrase, it is only necessary to refer to Isaiah 6: 5, where the same sentiment is expressed by the Prophet thus, "Then said I, woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of *unclean lips*, and I dwell among a people of *unclean lips.*" What Moses, then, meant by *uncircumcised lips*, is precisely the same that Isaiah meant by *unclean lips*. In Jer. 6: 10, and Acts 7: 51, the word *uncircumcised* is applied to the *ears* of the Jews, denoting an unwillingness in them to hear the words of the Lord. In Is. 52: 1, the Prophet thus speaks, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the *uncircumcised and the unclean.* By the *uncircumcised* here is evidently meant the *unclean*. In Col. 2: 13, are these words, "And you being *dead in your sins* and *the uncircumcision of your flesh*, hath he quickened together with

him, having forgiven you all trespasses." In this passage it is evidently designed to be taught, that what was included in the *uncircumcision of the flesh* was a *death in sins*. Again, the state of uncircumcision is thus represented by the Apostle, "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles *in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision*, by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; *that at that time we were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*" Eph. 2: 11, 12. From these passages it is evident, that circumcision, like baptism, implies *impurity in the heart*, from which man needs to be purged.

2. These ordinances do likewise imply each of them the pardon of sin. Said Peter to the convicted sinners on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins.*" Acts 2: 38. And the Apostle Paul, speaking of Abraham, says, "And he received the *sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.*" Rom. 4: 2. In each of these cases the religious ordinance is regarded as an *evidence* furnished by God himself, that he, to whom it was applied, should be considered as *absolved from impending guilt and misery*.

3. These seals likewise signify the regeneration of those to whom they are applied. In Tit. 3: 5, are these words in allusion to baptism, "But according to his mercy he saved us, by *the washing of regeneration* and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Again, in John 3: 5, the

Saviour thus speaks, "Except a man *be born of water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." According, therefore, to these texts, baptism is unquestionably expressive of regeneration. So also is circumcision. In Deut. 10: 16, are these words, "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked." Again, in chap. 30: 6, the same sentiment is expressed in the form of a promise, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." In order to understand this language, it will only be necessary for us to refer to the prophecy of Ezekiel, where the very same sentiment is to be found, and expressed, as it is here, in the form both of command and promise. In chap. 18: 31, God thus speaks by that Prophet, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, *and make you a new heart and a new spirit*; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In chap. 11: 19, 20, God thus addresses the same people, "And I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances and do them." When the Israelites were commanded, therefore, by Moses, to "*circumcise their heart*,"—they were commanded to "*make them a new heart*." And when God promised to "*circumcise their heart and the heart of their seed*;" he promised "*to give them a heart of flesh*," that they might keep his statutes. Nor are these solitary passages, in which circumcision is represented, as *the sign of regeneration*. In Lev. 26: 41, 42, God thus speaks, "If then their *uncircumcised hearts be humbled*,

and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity ; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember ; and I will remember the land." Said Stephen to the Jews, in his day, " Ye stiff-necked and *uncircumcised in heart* and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Acts 7: 51. Again, in Rom. 2: 28, 29, the Apostle thus speaks, " Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but circumcision is that *of the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." That that circumcision, therefore, which was in the flesh, was a sign of the regeneration of the heart, is the common sentiment of the Scriptures.

4. Each of these ordinances denotes union with Christ. Their meaning in this respect is beautifully expressed by the Apostle in the following language, "*In whom also ye are circumcised* with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ : *buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col. 2: 11, 12. In these texts, circumcision and baptism are not only exhibited as having one and the same office ; but each is represented, as uniting the soul to Christ.

5. They are each of them expressive of the mortification of the flesh and of obedience to the commands of God. " Know ye not," says the Apostle, " that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were *baptized into his death* ? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by

the glory of the Father, even so we *also should walk in newness of life.*" Rom. 6: 3, 4. Again, in Rom. 2: 25—27, are these words, "For circumcision verily profiteth, if *thou keep the law*; but, if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" In Phil. 3: 3, the Apostle thus describes the true circumcision, "For we are the circumcision, *which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*" It is thus evident, that both baptism and circumcision involve in them a strict adherence to the laws and commands of God. In fact, neither could possibly have any meaning at all without this. Why should God designate his people by any particular badge whatever, if it be not, that they should be a "*peculiar people, zealous of good works?*"

Thus have we shown the perfect similarity, *in every important point*, between circumcision and baptism. Now, from what has been thus proven, the conclusion follows irresistibly, *that they are both the seals of the same great covenant, and that the one has come into the place of the other.* It is impossible to reconcile *their perfect harmony* on any other hypothesis.

I shall conclude this lecture, in the following language of Calvin, (vol. iii. p. 352:) "Nor let it be objected, that the Lord commanded not his covenant to be confirmed by any other symbol than that of circumcision, which has long ago been abolished. For it is easy to reply, that, during

the time of the Old Testament, he appointed circumcision for the confirmation of his covenant; but that since the abrogation of circumcision, *there always exists the same reason for confirming it, which we have in common with the Jews. It is necessary, therefore, to be careful in observing, what we have in common with them, and what they had different from us. The covenant is common; the reason for confirming it is common. Only the mode of confirmation is different; for to them it was confirmed by circumcision, which among us has been succeeded by baptism.*"

LECTURE XI.

THE QUESTION DISCUSSED, WHETHER SERVANTS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED AS CHILDREN? AND, WHETHER CHILDREN SHOULD, IN VIRTUE OF THEIR BAPTISM, BE ADMITTED TO THE LORD'S SUPPER?

I. Should servants be baptized as children?

It would seem, at first, but a rational conclusion, that since baptism has succeeded into the place and office of circumcision, therefore, all servants, owned as property, should be admitted to this ordinance, upon the professed faith of their masters. Yet, however, in contemplating the state and history of the Christian church, we find that such has not, in point of fact, been the practice of the church; and that there are many obstacles in the way of such practice. The reasonableness of the inference above alluded to, and the impropriety of baptizing servants owned as property, have each appeared so obvious, and yet so contradictory, that many persons have been much confused in their views, in reference to the succession of one of these ordinances into the place of the other; and, conse-

quently, of the obligation of infant baptism. A few thoughts, therefore, on this subject, may not be amiss.

The writer is aware that the subject is not divested, by any means, of either obscurity or doubt. There are many brethren, whose views are entirely scriptural, as to the connection between circumcision and baptism, who yet are not perfectly agreed on this point. Some advocate the right of servants to baptism; others deny it. Some few practise it; the majority, by far, do not.

1. The first remark which I would offer on this subject is, that whether we advocate the right of servants to baptism, or deny that right, the obligation of *Pædobaptism* is, in neither case, affected by the opinion we embrace.

The admission of this right does not destroy the validity of infant baptism. In this case, even *more* than that for which we contend is granted. For, if it be argued that the succession of baptism to circumcision does *necessarily* imply the obligation to baptize servants, as well as children, then, certainly, if *the similarity of the two ordinances be fairly proven, children are undoubtedly admissible to baptism*. The only value in such an argument as this, as designed to oppose the institution of *Pædobaptism*, is to array the *difficulties* of the succession of baptism to circumcision, as an obstacle against the succession itself. But the *proof* to substantiate such succession is *one thing*; the *difficulties* involved in the conclusion are *another*. If this proof be clear and satisfactory, the obstacles in the way of applying the result, can never destroy the result itself. Besides, the impropriety of applying a principle, thus clearly proven, may exist in the *state* of slavery around us; not in the ordinance of Christ. This ordinance might be suited to

a *certain mode* of servitude, quite different to that which now exists. If such be at all the fact, neither the divine institution itself is to be rejected, nor are we to blame for not applying it, under circumstances inconsistent with both its nature and design.

But if, on the contrary, we take the opposite side, and suppose that the succession of baptism to circumcision does *not* involve the baptism of servants, as well as children, all that is required in such a case is, to give satisfactory reasons for making the difference. Thus, whatever side of this question we adopt, in neither case is the subject under discussion affected by the result.

2. My second remark is, that instead of advocating exclusively, either the one or the other, of the above opinions, I shall simply give a few of the more obvious arguments in favor of each, leaving it entirely with those wiser than myself to decide the matter; or, with the judgment of each to come to his own conclusion.

Against the succession of baptism to circumcision involving, necessarily, the baptism of servants, it may be urged,—

First. That the relation between master and slave, is neither an original nor a necessary one. It existed, it is true, in the early periods of society; still, however, was it rather *incidental* to that society, than essential to its existence. On the contrary, the relationship between parent and child is both original and necessary. It commenced with the existence, and must necessarily be continued to the end of human society. That God, therefore, should enact a law, *permanent* in reference to the one, and but

temporary in respect to the other, can involve in it nothing either absurd or inconsistent.

Secondly. It may also be argued against the admission of servants to baptism, that such admission would amount to a *positive enactment*, on the part of God, in favor of slavery. It would be making provision for that, which, on all hands, is regarded as an evil; and as an evil, which the spirit of the gospel will ultimately remove.

Thirdly. It may also be urged, in favor of this sentiment, that it was more the *ceremonial exactness* of the Jewish institutions, than the nature of the case, or the *spirit* of the law of God, that commanded the circumcision of servants along with children.

According to the Jewish law, all familiar intercourse with the uncircumcised heathen around, was strictly forbidden. Leagues and treaties were not to be made with them. No matrimonial connections were to be formed. And so strict was this latter regulation, that in the days of Ezra, very many husbands and wives were absolutely separated on this account; and this too, occurred when they had children who were the results of such marriages. Nor was it allowed the Jews to eat at the same table with the uncircumcised. Even so late as the days of the Apostles, we find the greatest particularity on this point. In Acts 11: 2, 3, it is said, "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, *thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*" Again, in Gal. 2: 11, 12, are these words, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before

that certain came from James, *he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*" Now, as the provisions consumed in a family must necessarily be much in the hands of servants; and as, from the very nature of the case, there must be much familiarity between domestic slaves and their owners; so, there was a *ceremonial necessity* for the circumcision of ancient Hebrew servants. Such necessity, however, does by no means exist under the Christian dispensation. A difference, therefore, in the application of the seal, may be regarded but as natural and proper.

Fourthly. It may also be urged against the baptism of servants upon the faith of their masters, that their circumcision, though universally practised among the Jews, was, nevertheless, but a *secondary appendage* to that church. In the 17th of Genesis, where we have the Abrahamic covenant expressed, we discover not the remotest allusion to servants in that covenant *itself*. Nor is there an allusion to them in the earliest annunciation of its seal. The application of the seal to them is noticed last; and seems evidently *appended* to what had gone before. Nor is this true alone in reference to the first introduction of this institution. The very same prominence is given to the *children* of the Jews above their servants throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. At the institution of the Passover, the same fact is to be observed. In Ex. 12: 24—27, are these words, "And ye shall observe this thing (the Passover) for an ordinance *to thee and to thy sons for ever*. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he has pro-

mised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when *your children* shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service, that ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the house of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." Again, in the 43d and 44th verses, God thus speaks, "There shall no stranger eat thereof, (of the Passover.) But, every man's servant, that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof." Here, too, the admittance of servants to the Passover is mentioned as something *secondary* to the admission of children. It may also be added, that, in almost all the threatenings and promises, addressed to this people, children are generally expressly included to the omission of servants. As an instance of this, let the reader consult the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy.

As, therefore, the admission of servants owned as property, among the Jews, to the membership of their religious community, was itself but secondary and subordinate to the admission of children, a difference, in the application of the New Testament seal, may be thence inferred as proper and becoming.

Fifthly. The inexpediency of baptizing servants may also be urged as a reason against the application of the seal of the covenant to them. Here, it is unnecessary to particularize. It is well known, that slaves are frequently not under the supervision of their masters; they are frequently sold into other hands. The law prohibits them from being taught to read; and, what is not the least, multitudes of them are already in Baptist churches.

From these several reasons, and others which it is not

necessary to name, it may be urged, that it is not only inexpedient, but contrary to the design of the Abrahamic covenant to baptize the servants of professing Christians along with their children. Nor can the method adopted by most Pædobaptist churches in the case, be regarded as a *gross violation* of the *spirit* of that covenant. This method is, to admit the children of professing servants to Christian baptism, upon the faith of their *parents*. I would only suggest, that, probably, it would be an improvement upon this system, to associate the masters with the colored parents. The grand object of the institution evidently is, *to have all the young under the supervision of God's own people, trained up in his covenant and for his glory.*

But against this view of the subject it may be urged ;

First. That as the Abrahamic covenant and its seal were both extended to servants owned as property among the Jews, the conclusion is inevitable, that the existence of that covenant is itself evidence that it is to be extended to slaves. There is nothing which prohibits the baptism of slaves. The very *silence*, therefore, of the New Testament may be regarded as argument in its favor. The privileges, too, of the Christian dispensation, being even greater than those enjoyed by the Jews, this very fact may be regarded as even positive testimony in favor of extending baptism to servants.

Secondly. It may also be urged, that, though the relation between master and servant is not *essential* to the existence of society, yet, the relation itself is always substantially the same. It implies the same dependence on the part of the servant ; the same authority on the part of the

master. It originates the same ties ; it devolves the same obligations. As, therefore, the relation itself is *identical*, wherever it exists, it must devolve the same duties and yield the same privileges. So that, if it ever has been obligatory, on a believing master, to devote his servants to God, the same obligation still exists.

Thirdly. It also may be urged in favor of baptizing servants, that it meets the original design of the institution. That design seems evidently to be, to bring all subject to the control of the religious head of a family, under moral and religious influence ; to secure their Christian education, and to establish them in habits of virtue and piety. Now it is evident, that it is the master, mainly, who is *responsible* for the religious instruction of his slaves. Entirely at his disposal, they may be admitted to Christian privileges, or withheld from them just at his pleasure. Under these circumstances, it must evidently subserve the cause of true piety and human salvation, to make the master *feel his responsibility*.

Fourthly. It may also be urged, in support of this side of the subject, that such practice would make the relation between master and servant both more pleasant and more useful, because more Christian. It would sanctify the tie which binds the slave to his owner ; and, preventing it from becoming the means of ill usage, would render it a bond of fraternal affection. By elevating the character, too, of the slave, it would render him more docile, obedient, and affectionate. On the one hand, it would slacken the rigor of the master's government ; and on the other, elevate and ennoble his authority in sight of his servant.

Thus, shedding a hallowing influence on both the master and his servant, it would make the relationship existing between them a source of real happiness to both.

Fifthly. It may also be urged, that no past neglect on this subject, no difficulties with which it is invested, can possibly present any lawful obstructions in the way of the application of this ordinance to its proper subjects. All that we need to know is, what is duty—what God commands. If he commands us to baptize and consecrate to his service our servants as well as our children, then it is our duty to obey, regardless of consequences. Past neglect on this subject is *our sin*: it can be, therefore, no apology for our future disobedience.

Such are a few of the thoughts, which, without pursuing them, I have cast out, in order to bring the matter fairly before the minds of our fathers and brethren. This particular part of the subject, no doubt, needs more attention than has been bestowed upon it. The salvation of his servants is a matter which must, and does lie near the heart of every believing master. And if their admission to Christian baptism be scriptural, and would be beneficial, then should its practice be adopted without delay.

I now pass to the other question, so intimately connected with this, and so immediately resulting from the conclusions of the last Lecture.

II. Ought children, in virtue of their baptism, to be admitted to the Communion Table?

This is a question about which there have been, and still are, many different opinions. If baptism has come into the place of circumcision, and if it be regarded as the door into the church, then the conclusion seems to be

inevitable, that *baptized children* should be admitted to the Supper, as regular members of the church. This conclusion is regarded by many as so gross and unscriptural, that they suppose it quite enough to destroy the premises from which it originates—on the contrary, multitudes regard this result as the very excellence of the institution, and glory in the full introduction of their children by baptism into all the privileges of the Christian church. These opinions are each of them extremes. There is a middle ground to be taken, both more safe and scriptural. This middle ground is, that *baptized children are not, in the fullest acceptation of the term, members of the church, and that, therefore, they should not, in consequence of their baptism alone, be admitted to the Supper.*

1. This will appear evident, in the first place, from a proper consideration of the similarity between circumcision and baptism. Although circumcision among the Jews preceded admission to the Passover, and other Jewish festivals, yet it was by no means the *exclusive qualification*. Although none might partake of the Passover, or enjoy the other privileges of membership, unless circumcised, yet not all who were circumcised were admitted. There were *four things* essential to a proper participation of the Passover, besides circumcision.

First. The possession of corporeal strength and ability. It would be impossible for a babe, at eight days old, to partake of the Passover. At this tender age neither meat nor bread would be adapted to its taste, or its digestive faculties. Before it could, therefore, be admitted to this feast, certain time must necessarily be afforded it. Probably, too, at almost every celebration of this institution, par-

ticularly when it occurred at Shiloh or Jerusalem, many were deterred from observing it, through the same reason. A sick man, like a child, could not celebrate this ordinance, for the want of bodily ability.

Secondly. There was also intellectual fitness necessary to the proper observance of this institution. If we contemplate it simply in the light of other sacrifices, then was it a seal and pledge of a promised Saviour. If we, together with this, associate with it its own peculiar properties, then did it commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from the death of the first-born, as well as from Egyptian bondage. In either case, it had a *special signification*, which needed to be understood, previously to a participation in its benefits. Nor could any be said properly to keep the Passover who did not thus understand its design. Accordingly, we not only find that the institution is clearly and definitely explained to the Jews themselves, but they were also required to teach their children its nature. In Ex. 12: 25—27, are these words, “And it shall come to pass when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he has promised, that ye shall keep this service, (the Passover.) And it shall come to pass, *when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say; It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.*” It is evident, therefore, that a proper celebration of the Passover always involved in it an understanding of its nature and design. I would here, too, take the occasion to remark, that there was a difference between circumcision and the

Passover in this respect : that one of them involved the act of the parent, the other that of the child. In circumcision, all that was necessary to its legal administration was, a proper understanding of its nature and obligations by the parent. But in the celebration of the Passover, as it was the child who was called upon to act, it was absolutely necessary that *he* should have the requisite knowledge. In addition, therefore, to the time taken for corporeal qualification, there would necessarily be other time consumed for the attainment of mental preparation for this feast.

Thirdly. There was also moral qualification necessary to the proper participation of the Passover and of other Jewish feasts. The moral qualification here alluded to referred to two things ; first, to a *profession* of the Jewish religion, and secondly, to *external propriety* of conduct. For all the grosser crimes, the Jews were not only excommunicated from their church, but absolutely put to death. And whenever there was an unlawful marriage formed with the surrounding heathen, the party was cut off from Israel. If then a member of the Jewish church had become openly wicked, in the view of their law, he forfeited, either for a time or for ever, the privileges of membership.

Fourthly. There was also, in addition to these, *ceremonial qualification* for the Passover. In the second celebration of this ordinance, which took place in the wilderness, there were certain persons who had touched a dead body ; and being, therefore, *ceremonially* unclean, could not keep the Passover at its proper time. See Num. 9: 6—11.

Besides circumcision, therefore, the Jewish laws required at least *four other essential qualifications* for

the proper participation of the Passover and other festivals.

We are liable to mistake on this subject, from making a comparison between the first institution of this ordinance and its subsequent observance among the Jews. This ordinance *arose* under the *patriarchial* form of church government; it was *continued* under the *national*. At first, the animal was slain *in the family*, and *by the family priest*; afterwards, it was slain by the *properly authorized ministers* of the Jewish religion, and at the place where God had recorded his name; that is, either in the tabernacle or temple. Consequently, when the Passover was celebrated, the nation generally met at Jerusalem. This would necessarily offer many inconveniences to the attendance of children. It is also likely, that it would lead to the appointment of some particular age, at which children should be brought to the Passover. This age, the Rabbins affirm, was appointed, and was at twelve years. This would necessarily arise out of the very nature of things. It is not likely, that a poor Jew, living at a considerable distance from Jerusalem, would take his child to that city to celebrate this feast, before he could perform the journey himself. And as a general rule, it is not probable, that children could do this before the twelve years specified by the Rabbins.

I would also observe, that mere circumcision, of itself, did not entitle to membership among the Jews. A Gentile who should have himself circumcised without any correct knowledge of the true religion, and without any submission to the terms of the covenant, of which circumcision was

the external seal, could certainly be in no proper sense a member of the Jewish community. So, also, a child, circumcised when young by his parents, although under obligation to observe the covenant, yet could he not be properly said to have consented to that covenant, or, in other words, to have become a member of the Jewish church, until he should signify such consent in some becoming way. This might be simply by his offering sacrifice, or coming to the Passover, or conforming in some way to the regulations of that church. His circumcision was his parents' act. There must, therefore, be something involving *his* act, to testify his assent to his parents' dedication of him, and his voluntary entrance into covenant with God.

Now it is evident, that baptism sustains the very same relation to the Supper, that circumcision sustained to the Passover. It introduces into membership, and admits to the entire privileges of the church, precisely upon the same grounds. But we have already seen, that circumcision was but *one* of *five* qualifications for the complete participation in the privileges of the Jewish church. The very same is true as to baptism; it is but *one* of *five* qualifications, for the perfect enjoyment of all the advantages of church membership. Probably it will not be amiss to specify these same particulars in reference to the Christian, as we have done in reference to the Jewish ordinance.

First. An infant now that is baptized still needs bodily strength before it can partake of the sacrament.

Secondly. It also needs intellectual ability to understand the nature of this ordinance before it partakes. A participation of the supper (not like the reception of bap-

tism) is the act of *the child*. This *child*, therefore, must understand the nature and design of this institution, or it cannot possibly celebrate it aright.

Thirdly. The child who is admitted to the Christian Passover, must also have *moral fitness* of character. Among the Jews this moral fitness of character consisted, as we have seen, in a profession of religion, and external propriety of deportment. Nor is the standard much higher amongst us. *We require the evidences of regeneration*. But a profession of love to God, and a willingness to be his servant, when genuine, are certainly the very best tests of an inward change of heart, that any church could possibly require. We may, it is true, from longer experience and brighter light, be more careful and even more skilful in discriminating and weighing the evidences of pious character. Still, however, after all, the fundamental principles upon which a Jew was admitted to the privileges of his church, are precisely the same with those upon which the Christian must be admitted to the rights of the Christian church.

Fourthly. We too require a *cereemonial* qualification for admission to the Supper. That is, we require that all who commune with us, be *regular* members of *regular* churches. It is not enough that they be baptized; it is not enough that they have both corporeal and mental ability for compliance with the ordinance; it is not enough that they be truly pious;—they must also be in perfect conformity to the usages and forms of the church, or they are legally and properly excluded from the table.

It is evident, therefore, that in keeping back our baptized children from a full participation in all the privileges

of complete church membership, until they assume the vows of Christian profession, we are pursuing a principle, existing in the very nature of things, and as ancient as the church itself.

2. The propriety of this course is also perceptible, in relation to the various confessions, creeds, and rules that have been drawn up as the standards of particular churches.

These confessions, creeds, &c. arose from the very nature of things. The interpretations put upon Scripture not only may be, but have actually been both very numerous and contradictory. From the most literal to the most extravagantly fanciful renderings, men have attempted to expound the Word of God. Those, therefore, who would hold and defend the truth, were under the necessity of agreeing upon the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and of arranging their sentiments in a set form. Nor could they possibly, with any kind of consistence, admit to their fellowship any who *essentially* differed from them in point either of doctrine or practice. The introduction of standards of faith and practice into different churches, necessarily produced *church covenants*. These *church covenants*, too, must, in every case, be subscribed, in order to membership. None could possibly be regarded as members, who had not assented personally to such engagements.

These church covenants now exist among nearly every denomination. It would be impossible to maintain denominational distinction without them. Nor are they at all at variance with the spirit and nature of either the Jewish church or the Word of God. Consent to a certain faith, and the adoption of a certain mode of worship, has

always been enjoined upon the professors of the true religion in every age of the world. It is true, that both the faith to be believed, and the form of worship to be practised, may have been in ancient times more *generally* expressed than they are now. Still, however, it was essential that they should have been expressed in some way. No one can possibly, with the least propriety, enter either the general church, or any particular church, without knowing the doctrines and duties of that church. A man may just as well be said to trade with propriety, who knows nothing about the conditions of a bargain, as to enter a church with propriety, when he understands neither its sentiments nor its customs. In every case, then, of admission into church fellowship, it is necessary that there be an express engagement between the church and the party introduced. This being the case, it is evident that mere baptism can, *in no case*, introduce into full membership in any Christian community whatever. This leads me to observe,

3. That baptism is to be regarded more as a *qualification* for church membership, and as an *evidence* or *badge* of it, than as constituting the thing itself. If it precede the assumption of the Christian covenant, it may be regarded but as a qualification for membership; if it succeed it, it may be looked upon as an evidence or confirmation of the assumption of that covenant, and of God's fidelity in that covenant. In the case of children, as well as of excommunicated members, it may be regarded as preceding the covenant engagement, and therefore as a qualification for membership. In cases where persons in adult years are first introduced into the church, its administration may

either precede the taking of the covenant, or it may follow. In the one case, it may be considered as qualifying for admission into the church; in the other, as being a seal or confirmation of such admission; or, probably, we had better say, that, viewed as *administered to us*, baptism becomes a *qualification* for membership; but contemplated as something *proceeding from and appointed by God*, it is a *seal* of our covenant relationship to him.

In order to illustrate these views, suppose a certain number of men to be associated for certain definite purposes, and to be regulated by a certain, a fixed constitution. Suppose, also, that it was necessary, in order to introduction into that association, to have, first, *personal fitness*; secondly, *to take a solemn oath on the threshold*; and, thirdly, *to sign the constitution*. Now it is certain, that so far as mere membership goes, the signing of the constitution, as it is the last, so it is the most important step in the series. Personal fitness could not constitute membership, nor could this, allied with the taking of the oath, constitute it. If a person, after having been judged worthy of admittance into such society, and after having actually taken the admission oath, should, nevertheless, refuse to sign the constitution, he could by no means be considered as a member. And if, too, such person should afterwards change his mind, and be willing to subscribe the constitution; in this case, it would by no means be necessary either to inquire into his personal fitness, or to administer the oath a second time. And, on the contrary, if we suppose such person to have signed the constitution; and yet that no inquiry had been made into his personal fitness, nor had the admission oath been administered; in such a

case his *membership* would already have been constituted ; although the *mode* of its accomplishment was irregular. The essential part of membership, in this as in every other case, must therefore be *personal submission to the rules and laws by which the community is governed, in which the membership is constituted*. Now, in order to apply this illustration, I would say, that this personal fitness represents, in adults, the profession of faith ; in children, the profession of believing parents. That the oath represents baptism, and that the signing of the constitution represents the assumption of the Christian covenant. Now, it is evident here, as in the other case, that neither personal piety alone, nor personal piety associated with baptism, constitutes membership in the church. On the other hand, a public assumption of the covenant alone, renders him who thus submits to it, a member of the church, though irregularly introduced. *The essence of church membership, therefore, is the taking of the covenant.*

In order still to render this subject more clear, suppose that a member of the Baptist church has, for misconduct, been excommunicated. In his excommunicated state, he is unquestionably *out of the church*. But suppose such a person subsequently to reform, and to apply again for admission into the church, what course would be pursued ? Baptism would certainly not be re-administered in such a case. All that could be necessary, would be the *re-assumption of the covenant*. In this case, certainly, baptism alone could not be regarded as the door of admission into the church, since the person really baptized was, nevertheless, out of the church, and, when re-admit-

ted into church fellowship, was not baptized a second time.

From all these considerations it is evident, that *baptism alone* does not constitute membership in the church of Christ.

To keep back our children who have been baptized in infancy, therefore, from the privileges of full membership in the church, until they subscribe the church covenant in their own persons, is perfectly consistent with the ordinance itself and with the Word of God.

Our practice in this particular, also, has in it two great advantages—it secures the pious training of the young, and, at the same time, excludes the wicked from the church : it both supports the religion of the family, and maintains the purity of the professing community of God's people.

I would also add, that from the views of the subject above, baptized persons, who yet have never *personally* taken the covenant upon them, as they are not members of the church themselves ; so they cannot claim the privilege of baptism for their children.

LECTURE XII.

THE RECEPTION OF CHILDREN INTO MEMBERSHIP
IN THE CHURCH WITH THEIR PARENTS, GREAT-
LY PROMOTIVE OF PIETY.

THE grand object of the church is, so to display the glory and grace of God amongst men, as to effect the greatest possible good. The church constitutes an intermediate kingdom between the world and heaven. Either the complete identification of it with the one or the other of these, or its perfect separation from them, would destroy its existence. If identified with heaven, or amalgamated with the world, the present character of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth would of course be obliterated. Or, if it were entirely severed from its Head, or disconnected with a world of sinners, it would also cease to exist in its present form. The character of the church, thus very much resembles that of the Redeemer. If the Saviour should cease to be either God or man, his mediatorial office would at once be destroyed. So, if the church renounces either her heavenly or her earthly character, at once does she cease to be an intermediate kingdom between this

world and the next. The utility of the church must, therefore, depend upon a proper maintenance of her intercourse with God, and her connection with the world. If the channel through which divine grace flows into her bosom be intercepted, she perishes; and if the streams through which that grace is diffused over an ungodly world, be cut off, she likewise dies. All efforts, therefore, to promote the best interests of the church, must have a direct reference to her connection, on the one hand, with God, and on the other, with the world. If, erring on the one side, we attempt to render her but a human institution, by dissolving her true relationship with her Divine Head, we destroy her, and convert her members into infidels. And if, on the other side, we attempt to render her perfectly isolated in the world, we effect the very same end, and render her inmates but the frenzied bigots of the grossest delusions. Hence fanaticism and infidelity, though perfectly opposite in their nature, have, nevertheless, been each of them, the inveterate enemies of all true religion.

The special medium of intercourse between the church and sinners, for which we now contend, is that by which the children of believing parents, in virtue of their connection with their parents, are received, in a certain sense, into membership in the church, and are thus brought under its supervision and care. This connection between the kingdom of Christ, and those for whom its blessings were designed, we assert to be both wise and gracious.

I. Our first remark on this part of the subject is, that such connection with the children of believing parents can do the church no possible harm. There are but two ways in which it can be conceived as injuring the church, either

by prostituting an ordinance of the gospel; or, by introducing unregenerated persons into Christian communion. Now, if it injure the church in the former way, it must be, either through the impiety with which baptism is received, or, through the subsequent impenitence and wickedness of the party baptized. But, it cannot be injurious through any impiety in its reception; because, it is administered by a regular minister of the gospel, in a regular Christian society, to a regular member of the church, and with proper explanation of its nature and duties. Certainly, in such a case, baptism is no more liable to abuse, than any other ordinance or truth of the gospel would be under similar circumstances. Nor can this ordinance be prostituted, by any subsequent impenitence and wickedness in the party baptized. The obligations of Christian duty which rest upon the most abandoned of men, can certainly never be regarded as vilified and abused themselves, through the ungodliness of him upon whom they rest. The obligations themselves must ever remain pure and spotless, however corrupt and vile the sinner may render himself in crime. And, besides, there are many cases of adult baptisms, in which the party baptized becomes abandoned and profligate. If, then, the falling of baptized persons into sin, must necessarily disgrace and prostitute the ordinance itself, then must we cease to baptize altogether. Nor is there greater probability that, out of a number of children properly baptized and educated, more will become impenitent and profligate, than from a number of baptized adults equally great. Both reason and experience teach, that the probability in the one case, is no greater than in the other.

Nor can the baptism of the children of believers injure the church, by introducing into her bosom unregenerated persons. We have already shown, that baptized children are members of the church, but *in tutelage*; that is, they may be considered either as *passive members*, through their parents, or as standing on the vestibule of the Christian temple, and *qualified*, in this particular, for personal and complete membership, whenever they may please to enter into covenant with God and his church. Without a profession of *personal religion*, they can gain no admittance into the full privileges of church membership. *Thus do they sustain a relationship to the church, of infinite importance to them, and which can, in no case, do the professing body of believers the least harm.*

II. A second remark I would make is, that the practice of baptizing the children of God's people, is of essential service to the interests of religion.

1. It is a sensible and positive proof of two of the prominent doctrines of revelation,—*the depravity of infants, and their need of grace*. It is the natural tendency of things in this world, for men to deny and disbelieve the moral corruption of human nature altogether; and, especially, to maintain the spotless innocence of new-born infants. That such errors as these would undermine the very foundation of the gospel, is certain. The denial of human depravity necessarily terminates in the denial of divine mediation; and the denial of the depravity of infants, is but the first step to the maintenance of adult innocence. The history of the church, too, bears ample testimony to the fact, that all such abatements of *total human corruption*, has finally terminated in the most dangerous

heresies. Now, in the baptism of infants, the sinfulness of their natures, and their need of divine grace, are strikingly exhibited, and put beyond the power of contradiction.

2. This practice also impresses on the minds of all, the great importance of the salvation of children. From mistaken views of the innocence of children, or from their inferiority in society, there is a very great tendency to neglect their souls altogether. Thus both the minister and his people are apt, in contemplating the larger forms of human existence around them, to overlook those smaller ones, every where diffused through their families and churches. We preach for adults—we pray for adults; but forget the children. We spend our lives, for the most part, in attempting to straighten the old and sturdy oaks of the forest, while we bestow but little attention upon the saplings and twigs by their side. But wherever the duty of baptizing children has been well understood, and uniformly practised, there their salvation has always been a matter of corresponding interest and effort.

3. The administration of this ordinance to infants, also strengthens the faith and increases the fidelity of parents. The salvation of his child, is that which should burden a parent's heart much more than any thing besides. His relationship to his child, his affection for him, his influence over him, all, should make him seek this object above every other. Now, in the baptism of his child, such parent has his duty defined, his work laid out before him, and the offer of divine help for its execution afforded. The parent may be regarded as properly enough entering into the following soliloquy: 'If my child were not depraved,

why baptize him? If he needed not regeneration, why apply to him its sign? If grace were not offered him, why am I commanded to bring him to a gospel ordinance? And if God will not bless my efforts, why enter into covenant with me in behalf of my offspring? Surely, no parent can possibly attend to this important duty, without feeling, in his own soul, his faith confirmed and his desires elevated.

4. Again. The baptism of the young, promotes the interests of the church, by securing for them a proper religious training. It secures this training in two ways: first, by the propinquity of baptized children to the church; and secondly, by the obligations this ordinance imposes. This end is effected by the propinquity of such children to the professing church. We have already shown, that they stand on the very threshold of the spiritual temple. They occupy a kind of nursery, in the very porch of the Christian community. This being the case, they are neither foreigners nor strangers; but the very seed and offspring of the kingdom of Christ. Their situation yields to them the very best advantages they could possibly have, for the attainment of Christian knowledge. They are like young Samuel, whom his mother dedicated to the Lord, and had raised in the very tabernacle itself. All the doctrines and hopes of religion, its institutions and blessings, are all theirs by birthright. Over them piety sheds her constant and hallowed influence. Faith, with all her witnesses for the truth, is continually pleading with their hearts. The voice of the Redeemer, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," is continually rolling

on their ears. For them, Hope is planting on the fair canopy of heaven an immortal star; and Charity, loveliest of the graces, is lightening in their tender countenances, the smiles of eternal joy, and spreading before them all the attractions of a life of holiness and peace. Thus circumstanced, how almost inevitable is the surrender of their youthful hearts to God.

But this practice also secures the religious training of the young, by the obligations it imposes. Obedience to divine commands is absolutely enjoined upon both those who administer and those who receive this ordinance. "This is my covenant," said God to Abraham, "*which ye shall keep.*" And said Christ to his apostles, "teach them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." There is an obligation, therefore, imposed upon the church, as well as upon the parent, to inculcate upon the young disciple the lessons of Christianity. There is also an obligation resting upon the child to receive and practise such instructions. Now it is evident, that, under such circumstances as these, the religious training of the child would be as effectually secured, as in the nature of things it could be in this life.

5. This practice also elevates the standard of piety in a church. This it does in at least three ways. First, by promoting the religion of the family. It awakens a deeper interest in the bosom of parents about the salvation of their offspring. It causes them to expect more, to undertake more. The consequence of this will be greater attainments of personal piety among parents themselves—more prayerfulness—more self-denial—more frequent fastings, and greater uniformity and consistency of deport-

ment. And as he, who is most busy at home is most apt to be industrious abroad, so the domestic labors and piety of the parent, will but prepare him for entering into more extensive fields of usefulness and duty. But this end is also attained, by uniting and harmonizing the entire efforts of the whole church, in promoting the salvation of her children. From this field of enterprise no believer in Pædobaptism can feel himself excused :—the obligation is an universal one, the duty is common. The necessary consequence of this will be, the originating of all those schemes and plans, by which the minds of children may be reached and well indoctrinated in the truths of the gospel. Parents will teach at home—the Pastor and Elders will visit and catechise—Infant and Sabbath Schools will be gotten up and supported—ordinary schools and academies will be established on Christian principles—and every possible instrument wielded, in order to secure an object so grand and so obligatory. Now, in the carrying forward of such a work as this, consists the very *vitality* of religion in a church. A stagnant religion can have no existence. Piety is active and benevolent in her very nature. The more, therefore, that a church is usefully employed, the more vigorous will be the exercises of grace among her members. Nor will the good work terminate with the immediate children of the church. Christians would become, under such circumstances, “nursing fathers and mothers” to the offspring of unbelieving parents. They would be ready to feel for wretchedness, wherever it existed ; and thus to diffuse their prayers, their sympathies, and their alms, over the whole world. The other way in which this practice would ac-

comply the end contemplated is, by furnishing candidates for admission into the church with the most eminent qualifications. Being born and raised in the very nursery of piety, and enjoying the very best opportunities for the improvement of the mind, and the cultivation of the heart, the children of the church would not only be early introduced into full membership, but would come in with advantages for a pious life, which no others could possibly enjoy.

6. This practice also renders the preaching of the gospel more efficient. One of the greatest evils with which the ministry has to contend is, the encountering of that opposition which arises from the ignorance, stupidity, prejudices, errors, and profligacy, which result from the neglect of domestic training. To enlighten a mind long enshrouded in the grossest ignorance, to awaken a conscience long seared in stupidity and sin, to bend a will long accustomed to its own control, to purify affections polluted with the grossest indulgences, to unfetter a soul manacled and chained in impiety, thus to transform the very image of Satan into that of Christ, is a work as discouraging as it is difficult. The filling of the house of God with such hearers as these, is but to render preaching a most hopeless task. It is like sending for the physician when the patient is in the very agony of death. It is to expect reformation, when the principle to be reformed is itself almost entirely annihilated by a course of abandoned profligacy. It is but to tempt God, and require miracles. In this case, the ministry becomes almost an insupportable burden, and is likely to be attended with little or no success. On the contrary, where parents have been faithful

in the discharge of their duty, and where, by his early baptism, the youth has been placed under the inspection and control of the church, the work of pulpit instruction becomes both easy and pleasant. In such cases, the conscience is tender, the heart impressible, and the disposition tractable. Long accustomed to venerate his spiritual teacher, the young man esteems him as a father and loves him as a friend. He values his counsels and receives his instructions. His place in the church is agreeable and easy ; and every thing connected with religion has, to the view of his mind, a lovely aspect, and exerts upon him a softening influence. The triumphs of the gospel, under such circumstances, must always be great and glorious. The work of saving men is much more than half accomplished in the family. Thus, while the pulpit upholds and sustains the piety of the family, in its turn the latter upholds and sustains that of the pulpit.

7. Another advantage which this practice renders the church is, that it offers the greatest possible inducement to unbelievers to embrace religion. The command to them is like that to Noah, "*Come thou and all thy house* into the ark." The same covenant that embraces the parent, is also extended to the children ; the same seal by which grace is offered and confirmed to him, is likewise applied to his offspring. When, therefore, an ungodly father sees, on the one hand, the great injury he is rendering his family, through his impenitence and unbelief ; and on the other, the great advantage he may be to them by becoming truly pious ; how irresistible are the reasons that thus operate upon his mind ? And how powerful must be those appeals, from the sacred desk, to such parents, which repre-

sent them as placed in the fearful alternatives, of either bearing their children along with them to hell ; or lifting them up by their faith to the abodes of blessedness ! What parent's heart can be steeled to such entreaties and motives as these ?

III. A third remark I offer is, that a strict adherence to the principles of Pædobaptism would afford the most powerful means now in existence for the conversion of the world.

This is a day of wonderful enterprise. The benevolent and evangelical societies, that decorate the church and are blessing the world, are very numerous. “ Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased.” But amidst all these efforts there is still a great deficiency. This deficiency consists in not bringing into the service of religion, as it should be, *the connection between parent and child*. It is the immediate influence of this very connection that is determining the fate of generation after generation. It is this, that leaves heathen to succeed heathen, Mahometans to fill the places of Mahometans ; and which causes one race of sinners to succeed another with awful exactness and certainty. All the efforts of the gospel, too, as now exerted—our churches and ministers, our benevolent associations and missionaries—are *but attempting to counteract the evils which one generation devolves upon another* : and it is a lamentable fact, that the solitary and pernicious influence of parents upon children is, at present, withstanding, and has for ages withstood, the whole moral force of the gospel ! All the efforts which the church of Christ is now making for the salvation of man, are inadequate to prevent the fatal effects of this one agent of Satan.

The reason of this is obvious. *The child is formed by the parent.* The influence which the latter exerts over his offspring, is greater than that which any other person can exert over him; or probably than the influence of all the world beside. This being the case, whoever wields the connection between parents and children, determines the destinies of man. If this connection is sanctified by grace, and directed by piety, *the whole world is saved.* If it be entirely in the hands of error and under the supreme control of sin, *the whole world is lost, irrecoverably lost, without the sovereign intervention of divine grace.* The contest, therefore, between Christ and Satan, as to supremacy in this world, is but a contest in reference to the wielding of *parental influence.* Whoever secures this point, according to the present state of things, is master. This is the powerful engine which decides the controversy and gains the victory. In attempting, therefore, to evangelize the world, the whole moral force of the church should be directed to the securing of this point. Without its possession the work never can be accomplished—with it, it is already done.

The securing to the interests of the church of parental influence, being, therefore, the great desideratum in the evangelization of the world, the question necessarily arises, as to the best mode of gaining this object. Now, it is evident, that this never can be done, without first gaining an entire possession of that parental influence which exists *within* the professing church. Without acquiring this, we raise up rebels in our own bosom that will subsequently harass and afflict us. In marching on to conquest, we have enemies behind us unsubdued, who will soon make

an assault upon our rear. It is also evident, that this never can be done by attempting to control the influence which ungodly parents *out* of the church, exert upon their children. As long as such parents remain ungodly, and control, as they must, the whole educational course of their children, it will be impossible for the church to secure to its interests *that* parental influence. An evil tree will bring forth evil fruit; and the influence which an unbelieving or heathen parent exerts over his offspring, must necessarily be pernicious. Nor is it at all possible for Christians so to supplant the parental claims of an ungodly world, as to have the management and raising of their children. The only course, therefore, to be pursued is, for the church, in the first place, fully to occupy her own territory; and then, secondly, to make all the conquests she possibly can. She must first take into her hands that parental influence which exists in her own bounds; and then she must make such accessions to her number as she can. She must first exact a pledge of faithful training from all her own members; and as she receives others into her bosom, she must require the same. In this way, and in this way alone, can she hope to get into her possession that *mighty lever* which determines the destinies of men.

Now, it is obvious, in contemplating the efforts of the present day for the salvation of men, that they are rather *secondary* than *primary*. We direct our attention too exclusively to the *adult* transgressors of God's holy law, to the neglect of children. We exert ourselves in attempting to transfer from the wilds of sin to the garden of the Lord, the sturdier trees, while we disregard too much those germs and sprouts in which the hope of success princi-

pally consists. Nor is it enough to reply to this, that we have our day, our Sabbath, and our infant schools. These, it is true, exert a powerful and a salutary influence; but still they do not reach the evil. We need an engine still, of a different kind. *We must control the connection between the parent and the child.* No matter what other means we employ, the work never can be secured without this. A teacher is not a parent, nor does the child regard him as such. The teacher, too, is but occasionally with the child, the parent is constantly with him. The teacher commences his operations at a later, and terminates them at an earlier age, than the parent. Nor can his influence ever be so great. If then the church would proceed wisely and efficiently in the great work in which she is engaged, she must manage, at least in her own bounds, the connection between parent and child. As no other human being can possibly take the place of a natural parent, so no other means can possibly supplant this. Now we assert, without the fear of contradiction, that the best possible mode of getting into her hands this powerful instrument, is, for her to exact a solemn pledge from all of her members, to be faithful in the religious training of their offspring. *She must baptize her children, or this object never, no, never can be attained.* We may just as well suppose, that the church could flourish and triumph in an *invisible state*—that is, without ministers, or officers, or members, as to hope for the accomplishment of this object, without the baptism of our children. We may with as much propriety suppose, that the cause of temperance would succeed without any *visible* organization, as that *parental influence, existing within the church, shall have its*

proper character and produce its proper results, without the obligation of this ordinance. No, nothing but an institution of this kind meets the exigency of the case. And take such an institution away, and there is nothing which can supply the deficiency.

In order to support these sentiments, I will add to what has already been said, but three additional considerations.

1. That wherever associations have been formed for the acquisition of any particular objects, designed for the advantage of mankind generally, it has always been regarded as an important matter, to associate with such institutions the influence of parents over their children, in the accomplishment of such objects. We observe this in the first place, in national governments. Just in proportion to the influence which the civil establishment of any country exerts upon children through their parents, will be the stability of such establishment. Associated with any state whatever, the connection between parents and children would give to government both strength and permanency; but disconnected from its interests, and the very same instrument would produce a total subversion of any political fabric in existence. It is to that patriotic influence which American citizens, as parents, exert upon their children, that we are to look for the perpetuity of our free institutions. And, if we were to suppose it possible for all the parents in our great republic to educate their children amidst sentiments of royalty and despotism, our government would be perfectly changed in the very next generation. It was through this very instrument, that ancient Greece and Rome arose to such renown. It was

almost entirely the influence of *fathers and mothers*, that produced those veteran soldiers in each country, that were invincible by any force then known. Lycurgus, the Lacedæmonian legislator, was particularly careful to control this influence to the advantage of the state. And, we hesitate not to say, that that government which neglects this solitary point, however perfect in every thing besides, can never be of any long continuance. Again, we see this fact also exhibited, in all efforts for the promotion of education. Children are the property, in a certain sense, of their parents. Without parental consent, therefore, no school can exist; our colleges and academies, our Sabbath and day schools, all depend for their very existence upon this very thing. Every plan, therefore, for the promotion of education, must have special regard to the connection between parent and child. Hence, we see those academies and Sabbath schools, that have parents and teachers closely associated together, almost always flourishing; while others, in which this is not the case, invariably decline. In the great temperance reform, which has recently commenced, we have also a practical exhibition of the same truth. Without associating with temperance societies the influence of parents over their children, what would such societies soon become? In those institutions, a special pledge is exacted from parents to train their children up in sentiments of sobriety. It is in this way we hope to remove the evils of intemperance, and to transmit to posterity all the blessings of this salutary reformation.

Now, we surely could not expect, that in a case infinitely higher than those alluded to, either God should pre-

scribe, or man select, a course less wise in its construction, than that which characterizes mere human institutions. The very nature of the case, therefore, requires, that the influence of parents over children should be *entirely*, and in *the highest degree*, allied with the interests of religion. Now, that such alliance can be attained in its *highest degree, but by the ordinance of infant baptism*, is so evident, as to need no proof. He who denies it, denies the very possibility of binding the consciences of men,—denies the utility of all means for the accomplishment of any end whatever.

2. A second argument I would urge in support of these sentiments, is, that from all we know of the divine administration, God does, in point of fact, employ *the connection between parents and children*, as the *great medium* through which to diffuse the blessings of his grace. From Adam to Moses, the principal means of religious instruction was by tradition. It was in this way that all the institutions of religion then existing, were transmitted; and even from the time that revelation was committed to writing, to the present, one grand and essential mode of its diffusion has consisted in the instructions furnished children by their parents. Among the Jews, children were taken particularly under the care of the church. It was from among them, that the places of deceased and pious ancestors were filled. They stood in covenant relation to God; and their parents were under most solemn obligations to train them up in his fear. Every thing, too, as we shall soon see, in the New Testament, favors the very same grand feature in the divine government. We see this, too, exhibited before our eyes daily, in God's provi-

dential dealings with his church. Who are to fill our places, as Ministers and Christians, when we are gone? Is it not our children? Are not the most of those who are admitted to church ordinances among us, our own offspring. Now, certainly, if God will thus employ parental influence for the promotion of his cause *at all*, he will do it in the *greatest degree* of which the case is susceptible. That is, he will exact a special pledge from all the members of his kingdom on earth, to train up their children in his fear. And he will invest this pledge with all the solemnity possible. That this was done in infant circumcision, was certain; that it is also effected in infant baptism, is equally certain.

3. A third remark I here make is, that infant baptism, wherever it has been well understood, and regularly practised, has invariably accomplished the ends above alluded to. In order to establish this proposition, it will be necessary to produce facts. The Presbyterians of Scotland, it is well known, are Pædobaptists. Of them it is said by a recent historian, "The Scotch have been a very intelligent and pious people. They have adhered remarkably to the great doctrines of the Reformation. *The Sabbath they have rigidly observed. To catechetical instruction they have attended more strictly than any part of the Christian church.*" Of the Independent Church, organized by Mr. Robinson, and settled for a time at Leyden, in Holland, it is said that they were, "in discipline, rigid; in practice, very exemplary." It is also said of them, that "the magistrates declared from the seat of justice, after they had resided in Leyden twelve years, 'These English have now lived among us these twelve years, and yet we

have never had one suit or action come against them.”” *They, too, were Pædobaptists.* Of the first settlers of New England it is said, “They were abundant in preaching, prayer, catechising, and visiting from house to house; and such was the fidelity, and such the excellent character of the emigrants, that religion exceedingly flourished, and intemperance, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, and other gross immoralities, were for a long time unknown in the community.” Of the present Independent churches of New England, it is said by the same author, “Catechetical instruction has been thoroughly pursued. Sabbath school and Bible classes are in powerful operation; and in no part of the Christian church have the doctrines of the gospel been so well understood by the great mass of her ordinary members.”

That the influence which these sentiments exert at present, upon families, upon schools, upon churches and communities, is most powerfully beneficial and hallowing, is a matter of fact before our eyes. None can deny it. Those churches in our own denomination which best understand and practice this doctrine, are decidedly the most systematic, the most pious and flourishing. And I would also add, that those families in which this subject is most attended to, are generally the most intelligent and devout.

It is also true, that the greatest friends to general education in our country, have been Pædobaptists. The most prompt and unwearied, also, in the cause of Sunday schools, and all enterprises that are designed to benefit the young, are of the same creed. The originator of this wonderful scheme was himself a Pædobaptist.

What reformations have been effected in communities

through this medium! What numerous conversions have taken place under the influence of these sentiments! What great luminaries have been raised up in the church in this way! How much domestic and church instruction has thus been accomplished! How much benevolent and missionary labor effected! Even Judson, in all probability, had never been an Indian missionary, but for the influence of these same sentiments! Who can see all this, and doubt the divine origin of this ordinance?

LECTURE XIII.

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE CONSIDERED.

I. The first remark I here make is, that the New Testament did, by no means, introduce a state of things entirely original. The changes it effected consisted chiefly in two particulars—*the reformation of the abuses connected with a church already existing, and the completion of that church itself.* When the Saviour commenced his ministry, he found at the head of the Jewish church a great many false teachers. Their influence was great, and their sentiments pernicious. Through their instrumentality, the truth had been perverted, prophecy was darkened, and the institutions of the ancient dispensation covered with rubbish. It was, therefore, necessary, that this Divine Teacher should commence immediately the work of reform. In all his instructions, and particularly in his sermon on the mount, we have abundant evidences of his labors in this respect. He censures these false instructors themselves, he exhibits the corruptions they had heaped upon the cause of God, he overcomes their arguments, and portrays the hypocrisy and inconsistency of

their lives. His labors, in this respect, much resembled that of the Reformers in a later age, whose province it was to rescue the truth of God from the abuses of the Romish hierarchy. Now it is very easy for persons in the present day to suppose that the corruptions of the prevailing sects in the time of Christ, were *defects* in the original Jewish church; and that while the Saviour was attempting to reform principles already existing, he was aiming to institute a state of things perfectly opposite to that which existed in the days of the patriarchs and prophets. But, certainly, it must be evident to the most casual observer, that one great object of the Saviour's ministry was to bring things back to their original state. It was not the design of our Reformers to institute a state of things essentially different from what existed in the primitive Christian church: it was their aim to bring back that very state of things, if possible. We are not to suppose, therefore, that because Christ opposed the Scribes and Pharisees, he also opposed the Jewish church; or, that because he censured the blemishes and absurdities of the religious sects around him, he also designed to condemn the principles and practices that existed in the times of Moses and David.

The other part of the Saviour's mission consisted in the completion of a system of things already commenced. The foundation of the church was already laid; it needed a superstructure. The gospel had already been preached; it needed only brighter disclosures. Prophecy had long foretold the advent and death of the Messiah; it was necessary that he should come, and that he should actually die for the sins of men. Very many, too, of the institutions of religion had already been given; these needed in part

a new modeling—needed to be adapted to the universal spread of the gospel.

But whether we look at the work of Christ as the reformation of a *corrupt* church, or the completion of an *unfinished* church, in either case, the state of things introduced by him, bears the strongest affinity possible to that which existed among the Jews. On this subject, Dr. Miller, in his Essay on the Eldership, thus remarks, “It is impossible fully to understand either the spirit, the facts, or the nomenclature of the New Testament, without going back to the Old. The Christian religion is founded upon that of the Jews; or rather, is the completion of it. The latter was the infancy and adolescence of that body, of which the former is the manhood.” Bishop Burnet, as quoted by the same author, thus remarks, “Any that will impartially read the New Testament, will find that when the forms of government or worship are treated of, it is not done with such architectural exactness, as was necessary if a new thing had been instituted, which we find practised by Moses. But the apostles rather speak as those who give rules for the ordering and directing of what was already in being.” And a greater than either has said, “I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill.”

Now if the New Testament be but the completion of the Old, and if there be, as there must, certain fundamental principles running through both, it is of the utmost importance to truth and piety, carefully and accurately to ascertain what these principles are. Without this we shall be liable either to receive as permanent what has passed away, or to reject as false what still remains:—thus, “while we pull up the tares we shall root up the wheat also.” If there

be those, then, who either reject the Old Testament altogether, or reject it so far as to deny that many of its essential principles are to be found in the New; it is absolutely impossible for such persons to arrive at truth. They may suppose that the easier way to discriminate between the Old and New Testaments, is to deny their connection; still, however, commencing with such a premise, their conclusions must inevitably be false; and all the efforts they make to uphold themselves will but conduct them farther into absurdity.

II. My second remark is, that it is not necessary to find in the New Testament, the *specific command* that infants should be baptized, or the *definite fact* that they were baptized, in order to prove from the New Testament, that they both were, and are to be, baptized. On this subject I employ three arguments.

1. The first of these is, that since pædomembership had long been a law in the church, the fact that *it is not repealed in the New Testament, is itself* sufficient evidence of its present existence. I have already shown that there is but one church of Christ on earth. Now, the institutions, laws, &c. of this church have been formed and collected in the same way, as laws and institutions originate in human governments. No government has been completed at once. In all of them improvement is gradual, and perfection distant. In the midst, however, of these successive steps towards their consummation, it is a principle universally acknowledged, that *a law which has been made is in force, until repealed by the same authority that enacted it, or by its equal*. Take, for example, the government of England. The statutes of that kingdom have

been instituted at different times. Some originated under Henry VIII., others under James I., and others under the Georges. They have been collected through successive administrations. Now it is perfectly evident, that a law, originating in the time of Henry VIII., if it be not subsequently repealed, is still a law of that realm. This law may not have been mentioned in the time of James I.; it may have been but incidentally alluded to in the times of the Georges; still is it a law in full force. The same may be said of our country; of any country. *The statute laws of any nation consist in the collection of those laws that have been enacted at different times and under different administrations.* A law which is made by one Congress, does not necessarily become obsolete upon the assembling of another. This latter may have the authority to abrogate it; but, unless they do actually annul it, it still remains a law of the government in full force.

Now the church has as really passed through different administrations, as any human government whatever. It existed, first, in an unembodied state. It was afterwards concentrated in the family of Abraham and the patriarchs. It was then organized with great regularity and precision under Moses. It was improved by all the prophets, and it now enjoys its richest glory under the dispensation of the gospel. The excellency, however, of the present dispensation, is not constituted exclusively from the instructions of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament; *but from a collection of all the instructions, laws and promises, that have ever been given to this church.* The book of Genesis is just as much a book of the church, as the book of Matthew's gospel. And as he who separates the New

Testament from the Old, eclipses the splendor of the Old ; so he that takes away the Old from the New eclipses that of the New. They are but the different records of different administrations in the same church. Certain then it is, that a law found in the book of Genesis, is just as obligatory, as a law found in the gospel of Matthew, unless the law in Genesis be afterwards repealed. If then an ordinance for the membership of children, be distinctly exhibited in the book of Genesis, and be also sanctioned by all the Scriptures down to the time of Christ ; in fact, *be ever recognized in the very person of the Saviour himself* ; and if this ordinance be no where repealed in the writings of the New Testament, it is evident that such ordinance still exists in the church. *The specific repeal*, then, of the ordinance of pædomembership, being no where found in the New Testament Scriptures, the membership of children follows as a matter of course. Nor will it suffice here to say, that, since the New Testament distinctly teaches that *circumcision*, the ancient form by which children were introduced into the church, is abrogated, therefore the introduction of children is also repealed. If this conclusion were correct, it would exclude adults as well as children ; for circumcision was the initiatory rite in the one case, as well as in the other. But if, on the contrary, both adults and children were admitted into the Jewish church by *circumcision*, and if *adults* are introduced into the Christian church by *baptism*, and the New Testament does not prohibit children from being introduced in the same way, it is perfectly plain that the very silence of the New Testament is proof of their right to membership.

2 Another argument in favor of this position, is taken

from what is termed *proselyte baptism*. That Gentiles were frequently introduced into the Jewish church, is certain: that they were circumcised when thus introduced, is also certain; nor is it much less evident that they were also *baptized*. The fact, that they were generally regarded by the Jews as *unclean*, would render this absolutely necessary. We know that with regard to the Jews themselves, when ceremonially polluted, they always went through certain watery ablutions before entering the temple, or coming to the Passover. It would, therefore, be not only natural, but essential, to purify Gentiles in the same way. This, too, would always be done on their first introduction into the Jewish community, and would be *extended to the whole family without distinction*. In confirmation of this, Knapp observes, “*The Talmud and its interpreters relate, that the proselytes, as well circumcised as uncircumcised, were initiated by baptism into the worship of the one true God, and that it was a symbol of purification from sin, and of the renunciation of heathenism; and that they were then considered as born again.*” Besides the authority upon which this declaration rests, it also has much additional evidence, from the two following considerations.

First. That it is by no means likely that the Talmudists should borrow the rite of baptism from the Christian church—it is much more evident that the Christian church received this ordinance from the Jews themselves.

Secondly. This fact accounts for many things in the New Testament, rather mysterious without it. Upon the supposition that proselyte baptism was an ordinance well known to the Jews, we perceive how it was this people so well understood this rite, as performed by John. We also

see why it was, that in its introduction into the Christian church, no explanation accompanied it,—why it was that *women* were baptized without any particular specification, and how it was that Christ said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And probably, too, it was in this way, that the baptism of Gentiles, without their circumcision, was more easily understood by the apostles and early teachers of Christianity.

If, then, baptism existed in the church long before the time of Christ, and if in such baptisms both males and females, adults and children, participated, it is evident, beyond all controversy, that the Saviour's command to baptize the nations, unaccompanied as it is by any explanation, must have designed the baptism of children, as well as that of their parents. *Proselyte baptism was administered by families; Christian baptism must also have been administered by families.*

3. A third argument in support of this position is, that if, on account of the *inexplicitness* of the New Testament on the subject of infant baptism, we reject this institution: on the very same ground must we also reject a *first-day Sabbath*. That the institution of the Sabbath is of parallel importance with that of baptism, will be denied by none who understand its nature and design. The Sabbath was first appointed in Eden, before the fall of man. It was subsequently incorporated into the very centre of the moral law, and engraved by the finger of God upon a table of stone. Like the other moral precepts, it was laid up in the ark of the covenant, and placed in the “Holy of Holies.” From its earliest origin, it has been an essential

support to the very existence of religion. So buried in the world as man is, unless there were a special day set apart for the worship of God, and sustained by divine authority, the services of the sanctuary would soon be deserted, and the chants and sports of bacchanalians, would soon succeed the solemn celebrations of the Creator's praise.

If, then, the Sabbath be an institution of at least equal importance with baptism, a change in the one is as important as a change in the other. Now, that the evidence in the New Testament to substantiate a change in the Sabbath, is as *slender* as that which establishes the right of infants to baptism, is absolutely certain. *If, then, infant baptism be denied, on the very same ground a first-day Sabbath must also be denied.* Many who object to infant baptism, have perceived the force of this conclusion, and some of them have even gone so far as to deny the Sabbath altogether, as an institution of the gospel! A principle which leads to a result so subversive of Christianity itself, and so injurious to all religion, we hesitate not to affirm, *cannot be from God.*

The man, therefore, who predicates the baptism of infants upon the very *silence* of the New Testament, places it upon a foundation which cannot be shaken. This silence, let it be remembered, too, is not a silence as to the ordinance of baptism itself: it refers to the *particular specification of infants*, as subjects for this ordinance. Now we hesitate not to say, that the *particular specification* of women, in the general command to baptize, was just as necessary to their introduction into the Christian church, as the *particular specification* of children was, in order to their admission to the rite of baptism. In fact, even more

so : for among the Jews, children were really accessible to the sign of the covenant, while women were not.

III. A third remark I make is, that there are many passages in the New Testament, a fair interpretation of which, will furnish sufficient evidence for the baptism of children.

1. The first passages we shall examine are to be found in Matt 28: 18—20, and Mark 16: 15, 16. The former reads thus, “ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” The latter reads thus, “ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved : but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”

These two texts are parallel and similar . they are but the two different modes in which the evangelists Matthew and Mark narrate the same fact. It is also to be observed, that it was at the annunciation of these texts, that baptism was made a regular ordinance in the Christian church. In order to understand these passages distinctly, I would observe, that the command in Mark, “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” is of the same import with the following, in Matthew, “ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.” The meaning of each is the same—*they are a general and binding commission, given to all the ministers of the gospel, extraordi-*

nary and ordinary, to publish the gospel over the whole earth.

Again, the passage in Mark, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," is the same as that in Matthew, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." That is, some of those to whom the gospel is sent, are to be baptized, others are not. Now the question at issue is, *to whom is baptism to be administered?*

On one point all are agreed—that, according to Matthew, those *adults* who receive the instructions given are to be baptized; or that, according to Mark, those adults who believe the gospel preached, are to be baptized. Here there is no controversy. *But are the children of those adults who receive the instructions given, or who believe the gospel preached, to be baptized also?* To this we answer in the affirmative, for the following reasons.

First. Because a very natural and unforced interpretation of this commission would embrace the children of such parents. The terms, "all nations," and "all the world," will include such children.

Such general appellations as these sometimes embrace women and children, and sometimes they do not: *the circumstances of the case must always determine it.* Thus, if it were said, that 'Europe was at war,' women and children would of course be excluded, because it is men who carry on war. But if it were said, that 'Europe had been visited by the great plague,' women and children would, of course, be embraced; since the ravages of that disease would know no difference in society. If it were said that 'the United States had made a certain law,'

women and children would of course be excluded, because men usually legislate. But should it be said, that 'the United States had been afflicted by a famine,' women and children would, of course, be included, since they are as liable to the evils of such a judgment as men.

Now there are four things predicated of the "all nations," or "all the world," in these texts. They are to be taught, or preached to—they are to believe—they are to be baptized—and they are to be saved. Now, two of these can be affirmed of infants, and two cannot. They cannot be taught, nor can they believe: but they are capable of both infant baptism, and of salvation. There are *natural barriers* in the one case; there are none in the other. Now if this commission means, that those who are capable of being taught, are to be taught: that those who can exercise faith, should be required to believe; does it not also mean, *that those who can be lawfully baptized, are to be baptized; and that those who are fit subjects for salvation, shall be saved?* Now, that the infants of believers could be introduced into the Christian church by baptism, just as the offspring of Jewish parents were by circumcision, is evident: and that they are among the *saved*, is generally allowed. This first commission, then, of the Saviour to his disciples to spread the gospel over the earth, does very naturally embrace the children of the pious as fit subjects for baptism.

Secondly. Although the words "*teach*" and "*believe*," in these texts precede the words "*baptizing*" or "*baptized*;" yet does this fact not prove, but that, in the practice, in some instances at least, baptism may be performed first, and then teaching and faith may follow. In John 3: 5,

it is said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Here the water is put first. But according to the opinions of those whose sentiments I am opposing, the Spirit must first be given. Now, by parity of reasoning, we may suppose, that water, in the case of infants, may first be administered, and then the teaching and faith may follow.

Besides, even supposing as we do, that the Saviour designed to teach his disciples to baptize children, a different mode of expression from that employed in these texts, would have been extremely circumlocutious and awkward. It would have been somewhat in the following form, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; infants, however, you may baptize before teaching, as they are incapable of receiving instruction.' Certainly such a mode of expression has no parallel in the Word of God.

And, again; if the Saviour designed to teach them, that the children of believing parents were to be baptized, and if they understood him thus, such an appendix to the commission would have been absurd; for the apostles well knew, that infants were alike incapable of either instruction or faith. So that *all this can mean, as applied to infants, is, that when they are capable of faith, it should be required; and when they are capable of instruction, it should be communicated.* But it is no more necessary that they should be taught, and that they should believe, in order to *infant baptism*, than that they should be taught and should believe, in order to *salvation*.

Thirdly The apostles must necessarily have under-

stood the command to baptize, as applicable to the children of professing believers. They were Jews, and had long been accustomed to the introduction of children into the church. They had been accustomed to this not only by the rite of circumcision, but of baptism also. The children of believing Gentiles had long been introduced into the church by the same ordinance, which was then enjoined upon them. Nor were they strangers to the requisition of faith in order to church membership. Circumcision, as well as proselyte baptism, had always required this qualification in order to its proper administration. "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart." To suppose, therefore, that the apostles could have understood this commission, so as to exclude the children of believers from baptism is the height of absurdity. And to suppose that the Saviour designed them to understand it thus, is equally irrational.

Suppose that the command had run thus, 'Go, teach all nations, *circumcising* them,' &c.—what meaning must the apostles have attached to such a commission? Certainly, that they were to circumcise believing adults, and also their children. Suppose that the command had been thus expressed, 'Go teach all nations, *proselyting* them,' &c.—what construction would the apostles have also put upon these words? Certainly, that they were to receive into membership, by both *circumcision* and *baptism*, all who should receive the gospel: and that they should administer the same rite to their children. What, then, is the difference, when he commands them to preach the gospel

and *baptize*? Unquestionably, under these circumstances, they must have understood him as before to mean, that *they were to baptize believers and their seed*. They could not have possibly understood him differently. No Jew could have understood him to mean any thing else. Nor can we, but by a thoughtless disregard of all the rules of just interpretation.

Now, if it were absolutely impossible, that any among the Jews could have understood the Saviour differently, from what we here maintain, then, certainly, it was the design of the Redeemer, in these texts, *to include the children of believers* in the command which he gave his apostles, to disciple the nations. The fact, therefore, that these passages run as they do, is altogether in favor of infant baptism; and against the sentiments of those who deny it.

From what has been said it is evident, that the baptism of the children of believers is clearly inculcated, in the very first introduction of this ordinance into the Christian church. And the requisition, of a *particular specification*, of such children, as fit subjects for baptism, in this commission, in order to their admission to such rite, is not only unfair, but *irrational*. *Women* are not specified; and yet we find the apostles baptizing them in their subsequent ministry. Nor are any distinct classes of men specified; and yet we find that *all classes* were admissible to this ordinance. And the supposition, that the requisition of faith excludes them, is a mere cavil. Because, we have already shown that faith was required, in both infant circumcision, and in infant proselyte baptism. But, then, it is the *faith of the parent*, when such ordinances are

administered to children. Besides, if the want of faith in a child excludes from baptism, then it also excludes from salvation.

2. A second set of passages which we shall consider, are the following : Matt. 19: 13—15. Mark, 10: 13—16, and Luke, 18: 15—17.

In Matthew the circumstance is thus related, “Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray ; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me : for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed thence.” In Mark it is thus expressed, “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them : and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But, when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Luke states it thus, “And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them : but when his disciples saw it they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.”

With regard to the practical inference drawn from the incident above alluded to, and mentioned by Mark and

Luke, it is evident that it was made for the special benefit of those around the Saviour when this circumstance occurred; especially was it designed for the benefit of the disciples who kept the children back. This being but a kind of appendix, has but little to do with the explanation of the passage itself. However, if it be insisted upon as a key to unfold the meaning of the phrases with which it is connected, it will still subserve our purpose; for it declares, *that there is as much fitness for the kingdom of God in a little child, as there is in a converted adult.*

It is evident that the children here spoken of were babes, for they are called both "little children" and "infants."

Nor is it less obvious, that by the phrase "kingdom of Heaven or of God," here, is meant the Christian church. This phrase very generally signifies the church in the gospels; and the circumstances of the present case seem to confine its signification to this particular. The disciples, and probably the believing Jews generally, entertained very erroneous opinions as to the nature of the mission of Christ. They even associated with it, an earthly sovereignty. The Saviour, therefore, embraced every opportunity of removing these errors, and of establishing them in the knowledge of the truth. The incident in these texts offered a fit opportunity for the communication of such knowledge. "Whosoever," says he, "shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Now it seems evident that the kingdom of God, here, means the church, or that kingdom the Saviour was about to set up on earth. And if that phrase, in this case, means the Christian church, it also does in the other in-

stance where the Redeemer says, "of such is the kingdom of God."

I would also remark that the Saviour received these children with great promptness. Just so soon as he perceived that the disciples had hindered them from approaching him, it is said, he "was much displeased," and exclaimed, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and then taking them to his bosom, he blessed them.

The argument contained in these passages, however, chiefly consists in the following phraseology, "*for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.*" What did the Saviour mean by this expression? Our opponents would say he meant, that "of persons, who, in their tempers and dispositions, resemble little children—'of *such* was the kingdom of heaven.'" But, this interpretation evidently makes nonsense. Children are brought to Christ—the disciples forbid their admission—the Saviour, perceiving it, exclaims "suffer them to come;" "*for of adults of childlike tempers and dispositions is the kingdom of God!*" It is evident, that this interpretation cannot be the meaning of the passage, for it destroys its sense. What other meaning, then, can be assigned? Certainly none at all, unless we suppose that the Redeemer designed to express a *meetness in children for that kingdom which he was about to set up on earth*. The word *such* evidently refers to "*little children*"—the phrase "kingdom of Heaven" certainly seems to be confined in this place to the Christian church; and the whole expression was designed to contain a reason why children should be brought to Christ. Put all these things together, and it is certain that this passage was designed

to express the *admissibility* of infants to church membership, or, which is the same thing, to baptism. Nor is it any objection to this conclusion to say, these children were not brought to Christ for baptism. This no one will assert. We are only inquiring into the meaning of the Saviour's language. And, certainly, if words convey any meaning, these imply the fitness of the children of believers for baptism.

3. A third passage is the following, in Acts, 2: 38, 39. "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*"

In order to understand this passage, it will be necessary, in the first place, to inquire what is meant here by the word *promise*. In Gal. chap. 3, we have this subject clearly explained. In verses 13, 14, are these words, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit through faith.*" Again, in verses 16, 17, it is said, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the *promises* made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many, but as of one: and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that *it should make the promise of none effect.*" In verse 22, it is said, "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, *that the promise*

by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe." And again, in verse 29, are these words, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs *according to the promise.*" In Heb. 11: 39, it is said, "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not *the promise.*"

From all these passages, it is evident that the word *promise*, as spoken of by Peter, meant those *assurances given to Abraham, that through the Messiah a great abundance of grace should be extended to his posterity; and which was to be received by them in the exercise of faith.* This is beautifully expressed by the prophet in the following language, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Is. 44: 3.

By the word *promise* is meant, then, those *gospel blessings* which were preached to the multitudes on the day of Pentecost, and which had previously been proclaimed to Abraham. This is also confirmed by what the same Apostle says in the next chapter, and in the same way, "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3: 25, 26.

But the principal question in debate here is, to whom were these blessings offered? "For the promise," says the Apostle, "is to you *and your children*; and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

It is evident, in the first place, that these blessings were offered to the adult Jews then listening to the Apostle, and living in Jerusalem.

It is also evident, that they were designed to be extended to the Gentiles, for this is what is meant by the expression, "all that are afar off."

But, in addition to these, it is said that the promise is to certain "*children*." Now, it is evident that this must embrace one of two things, either *adult* or *younger children*. But it could not, with the least propriety, be referred to *adult* children; because, adult children were then component parts of the audience addressed. The term *children*, here, then, must refer to *younger children*, at that time under age, and fit subjects for membership in the Christian church by baptism.

It also confirms this view of the subject, to remember, that allusion is here made to Abraham, the father of circumcision. The Jews, then addressed, had always been in the habit of circumcising their children. They placed even an excessive reliance upon that ordinance. They associated with it every divine blessing. When, therefore, the Apostle exhorted them, under conviction for sin, to "repent and be baptized," and urged as a motive, "for the promise is to you and your children;" it was utterly impossible for a Jew not to have understood the Apostle, as directing him to baptize his children as well as himself, in expectation of the same grace for his offspring that was extended to him. To conceive differently, is to suppose that Peter designedly misled his countrymen on that solemn occasion. I say *designedly*; for, as a Jew, addressing Jews, his language must inevitably have done so, un-

less he intended the admission of their children also to membership with their parents.

4. A fourth set of passages will be found in Acts 16: 14, 15, 31—34. 1 Cor. 1: 16. The first of these passages reads thus, "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended upon the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, *and her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there: and she constrained us." The second is expressed thus, "And they, (Paul and Silas addressing the jailer in the prison at Philippi,) said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and *all his*, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house*." The last passage reads thus, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas."

With regard to the first of these cases, it seems evident that the family of Lydia was baptized upon the profession of *her* faith. It is said, and when *she was baptized and her household*. She was first baptized, and then her family. Certainly more could not be said of any Pædobaptist whatever. She was, also, the principal person in her house. In addressing the Apostles, she associates no other with her. "If," says she, "ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into *my* house and abide there." Observe,

now, the circumstances. *She had a family of some sort; she was baptized before them; speaks in her own name; holds the entire prominence in the whole transaction; they were all baptized.* Certainly, if these circumstances prove any thing, it is that Lydia, after believing and being baptized herself, gave to God her family in the same ordinance by which she herself had been sealed as a Christian believer.

Nor is it an objection to this conclusion to say, that there is no satisfactory evidence that she had a family of *small children*. It matters not whether they were *infants*, or *older children*. In either case, if they were not really *adults*, it would have been her duty to have baptized them.

Nor is the circumstance related in the last verse of this chapter, any thing contrary to this conclusion. It is there said, "And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the *brethren*, they comforted them and departed." From the prison the Apostles went to Lydia's. This was natural, for their lodgings had been there before they were put into the prison. They had been tarrying there, too, "many days," and no doubt had received many accessions to the church in the city. By the word "*brethren*," here, then, we are not, by any means, to understand the "household" of Lydia, but the *church* at Philippi.

In reference to the jailer, it is manifest, from the manner in which Paul first addressed him, that his family were baptized upon the profession of *his* faith. It was night; the jailer, under strong convictions of sin, had fallen at the feet of the Apostles, exclaiming, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Immediately the Apostle replies, "Believe in

the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*" Now nothing is more clear than that, in this direction, the religious state of the jailer's family was suspended upon *faith in him*. 'If thou believe, thou shalt be saved, *and thy house also.*'

This interpretation is also strengthened by the following phraseologies: "*and was baptized, he and all his straightway:*" "*and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*" The word "*house,*" as used in the Scriptures, in the sense in which it is here, almost invariably means *children*. And it is evident, that, in this case, it signifies *children under age*,—for they are represented as living in the jailer's family, and as being entirely under his control.

The jailer, too, is represented as the chief actor in the whole affair. *He* said, "Sirs, what must *I* do to be saved?" "And *he* took them;" and *he* "washed their stripes;" and "*he* was baptized," and all *his*; "*he* brought them into *his* house;" "*he* set meat before them;" *he*, "*believing with all his house.*" "And they spake the word of the Lord unto *him*, and to all that were in *his* house." Throughout the whole, the jailer is chiefly to be seen.

It seems, therefore, evident, that the children of the jailer were baptized upon the profession of *his* faith. Nor is it an objection to this to say, that the word was preached to *him* and to *all* in his family. This was a matter of course. It is not to be expected that any Pædobaptist would have neglected the instruction of *the children*. Nor is it likely that the jailer had more than one or two children incapable of receiving instruction.

As to the case of Stephanas, it is objected that *children*

could not have been baptized in that instance; because it is said in 1 Cor. 16: 15, "they had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." This, however, instead of being any evidence against Pædobaptism, is but a proof that Stephanas understood its nature well himself; and that he had resolved to raise up his family according to its requisitions. The pronoun "*they*," as well as *ministering to the saints*, can certainly be referred to any family whatever. A family ordinarily consists of *father, mother, larger and smaller children*. Now, certainly, it would have been perfectly proper for Paul to have thrown such a *household*, or any *household*, into the plural number; and that they may have engaged in works of charity, is certain. Besides, the Apostle says, "I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas." It is clear, from the very phraseology, that Stephanas had *children*, and that *those children, still living in his family, were under age*. If this be so, of course they were baptized upon the faith of their parent or parents.

5. Another example from the New Testament, which will require a special consideration, is the following, 1 Cor. 7: 14—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*."

That the words "*sanctified*," "*unclean*," and "*holy*," as used in this passage, refers to *moral properties*, and not to either natural or civil, is so certain as to require no proof. They are borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures, in which they *invariably* have that meaning. The Apostle was a minister of Christ, and the persons he was addressing were a Christian church. What had the Apostles, in this

case, to do with political matters? Besides, the question under debate involved the *moral aspect* of marriage in relation to *the church*. To suppose, therefore, that the words above alluded to, have a *civil* and not a *moral* signification, is to destroy their meaning altogether.

The circumstances under which these words were spoken, were as follows. It was customary among the Jews, to interdict marriages between Jews and heathen. Such alliances were always attended with the abscision of the Jewish part of the marriage compact from the privileges of his church, except in cases in which the heathen party became a member of the Jewish community. In all such cases, the children of such unequal marriages were also regarded as unclean, and were debarred the rite of circumcision, and other privileges belonging to the Jews. Hence we find in Acts, 16: 1—3, that Timothy had not been introduced into the Jewish church at all, *because "his father was a Greck."* And thus also in Ezra 10: we find that, after the Jews had married heathen wives, and even had children by those wives, both their wives and the children born of them were repudiated, to a very large number. Now at the church at Corinth, it is likely, there were Jews, as well as Gentiles, in the church. These Jews would, of course, desire to have matters regulated according to the ancient customs of their church. And as there were among the Corinthian Christians, many of these unequal alliances, the advice of a Jew, of course, would be, that they should all be broken off; and that both the unbelieving part of the marriage compact, together with the offspring of such marriages, should be repudiated. This immediately excited controversy about this

matter : the consequence of which was, an appeal to the judgment of the Apostle. The chapter from which this text is taken contains the Apostle's advice in reply.

The substance of this advice is as follows:—‘That there should be, if possible, no such separations of persons already married—That if the believer had already separated, he should remain unmarried, and should also seek to be reconciled to the other part of the marriage compact—That in cases, in which the unbelieving husband or wife would not live with his partner, and the matter was irreconcilable, such partner might seek another marriage.’ And, in order to induce compliance with his injunctions, the Apostle employs the language in the passage under consideration. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband : else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.” To which he also subjoins, as an additional motive, “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband ? Or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife ?”

This language employed as a motive was two-fold. In the first place, the salutary influence which the piety of the believer would have upon the unbeliever ; and, secondly, *the condition in which it placed the children of such marriages*. In reference to the former, it is said, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.” The meaning of this is evident :—It is, that instead of the corrupting influence of the unbeliever, so polluting the believer, as to separate him from the church and its privileges ; the piety of the believer exerted a sanctifying influ-

ence upon the unbeliever; and might even be made the means of his conversion. Hence the Apostle exclaims, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

But the piety of the believer also affected the condition of the children of such marriages—"else, were your children unclean, but now are they holy." The word *else* refers to the previous fact, that such unequal connections would not abscond the privileges of the believing party in the marriage compact. 'If the privileges,' argues the Apostle, 'of the believer were denied him, in consequence of his having an unbelieving partner, then his children, (as was always the case among the Jews,) would be *unclean* : but since his privileges, as a member of the church, were not to be denied him on this account, his children were *holy*.'

In order to understand this passage clearly, we must have recurrence to the customs of the Jews in such cases. Now, it is evident, that, according to the Jewish laws, an *unclean* child would be rejected from circumcision. It is also evident that a *holy* child, that is, one who was the offspring of the members of their church, would always be required to be circumcised.

We are obliged, therefore, to come to the conclusion, that the Apostle meant, by the word "*unclean*," as applied to these children,—*inadmissible by baptism to the Christian community*—and that he designed to represent them by the term "*holy*," as *admissible to such community, by the same ordinance*. Certain it is, that no Jew could have understood him differently; and as the sentiments of the Jews were diffused throughout all those early Chris-

tian churches, it is equally certain, that no Gentile believer could have understood him differently.

Now, in conclusion, let us sum up the New Testament evidence already separately exhibited in this lecture. We have seen that without *an express prohibition* of the children of believers from membership in the church, such membership follows as a matter of course. That the introduction of either circumcision, or baptism, or both, into the Christian church, as the seal of membership, would have embraced children, since they had both been applied to children for a long time previously. That the denial of infant baptism must be followed by the denial of a first-day Sabbath. That in Christ's commission to his apostles to baptize, he evidently included the children of believers. That before his crucifixion the Saviour took little children in his arms and declared, "Of such is the kingdom of God." That in the very first Christian sermon preached to the Jews, Peter declared, "the promise is to you and your children." That the Apostle Paul said to the convicted jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*." That Lydia and Stephanas had their households baptized. And that the Apostle declares the children of unbelievers to be "*unclean*;" but that the children of believers are "*holy*." Let all this amount of evidence be spread before the mind; and if it produce not the conviction, *that the children of believers are to be baptized*, we tremble for many other Christian doctrines and institutions. To complain of the want of light amidst such rich displays of it, is but to cavil at the truth, and to venture upon the displeasure of God. Nor can we expect the divine blessing in such a case. The

frown of the Almighty will rest upon us, and our children. We are trampling upon the very birthright of our own offspring. We are entailing poverty of soul upon our descendants. We are alienating their affections from God, and preparing them for a course of profligacy here, and the awards of impenitence hereafter. And all this we are doing by the perpetual rejection of light, and the pampering of prejudice. Ah me, I solemnly fear, that many a poor child, lost through parental incredulity and folly, will rise up in the judgment as a witness against their own parents! Oh that we were wise, that we would consider this; and avert from our houses the righteous judgments of God!

LECTURE XIV.

A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

I. My first remark here is, that, as Christianity was originally propagated by Jews, and at first chiefly among the Jews ; and as the Christian system, instead of being entirely an original one, was, in a great measure, the offspring of the Jewish church ; so we are not only to expect that the Jews, when converted to Christianity, should understand its doctrines and institutions as Jews, but *that they should even comply with many of the peculiarities of Judaism, properly so called.*

1. This would naturally arise from the very nature of the case. Raised, from their earliest life, amidst the doctrines and habits of that system, it could not be expected that they should renounce them at once. Their customs and manners, their peculiar phraseologies, their conceptions of things, their whole character, would still remain essentially Jewish. Nor would they cease at once to comply with the forms of worship, and the various ceremonies of the former dispensation. They would still visit the

synagogue, venerate the temple, circumcise their children, and offer sacrifices.

Innovations in ancient usages are always gradual in their development. When a nation, now-a-days, renounces idolatry, we are not to expect a total eradication of all the vestiges of superstition at once. This would be unreasonable. Their language, and dress, and customs, and whole character, would still be tinctured with the religion of their ancestors. Even when a solitary individual, from a long course of error and sin, is converted to God, many of his old habits still remain, as relics of past impiety. This is human nature, and it is invariably so.

2. This would also be peculiarly the state of things among the Jews, since the Christian church not only bore a strong analogy to their own ecclesiastical polity, but was its *predicted completion*. That divine standard of doctrine, which they acknowledged, was also the text-book of Christians. The Saviour of the Christian church was their own promised Messiah. The abundant affusions of the Holy Ghost, which was realized at the first preaching of the gospel, was but the fulfillment of their own prophecies. And as to the converted Gentiles, they were but introduced, by the gospel, into those privileges which the children of Abraham peculiarly regarded as their birth-right. Under these circumstances, it is by no means probable, that the conversion of a Jew to Christianity would be immediately succeeded by the entire renunciation of Judaism.

3. This we find to be true in point of fact. The early Jewish Christians worshipped in the temple, assembled in the synagogues, circumcised their children, celebrated the

various feasts, and observed the ceremonies of their ancient system. Of this we have abundant evidence in the Acts of the Apostles. In chap. 3: 1, it is said, "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." In chap. 10: 9—16, we find that a special vision was given to Peter, to convince him of his duty to preach to the Gentiles. And even to this time, that Apostle could say, in the language of a Jew, "Not so Lord, for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Verse 14. In chap. 11: 2, 3, are these words, "And when Peter was come to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." In verse 19 it is said, "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that rose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to *none, but unto the Jews only.*" In 13: 14, 15, it is said, "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." The great dissension in the fifteenth chapter also exhibits the same thing. The Christian Jews observed particularly,

First—the Jewish as well as the Christian Sabbath. In 17: 2, are these words, "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and *three Sabbath days* reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Again, in 20: 7, it is said, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples

came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them," &c. These are but two instances out of many, to show that the converted Jews, as they celebrated the Lord's day in honor of Christ, also observed the seventh day from ancient custom.

Secondly. They also observed both the Passover and the Supper. In chap. 20: 6, 7, both of these feasts are alluded to almost together—"And we sailed from Philippi *after the days of unleavened bread*, and came unto them at Troas in five days, where we abode seven days." In the very next verse it is said, "And upon the first day of the week, *when the disciples came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them, and continued his speech until midnight." By the "*days of unleavened bread*," is meant the Passover, and by "the breaking of bread," the Supper. Many other evidences might be adduced if necessary.

Thirdly. The Christian Jews also observed both circumcision and baptism. In chap. 21: 17—26, are these words, "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousand Jews there are which believe; *and they are all zealous of the law*. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews, which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, *that they ought not to circumcise their children*, neither to walk after the customs.

What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this, that we may say unto thee, We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing: *but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law.* As touching the *Gentiles which believe*, we have written and concluded, that *they* observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them." This quotation furnishes evidence conclusive, that all the Jews, the apostles not excepted, observed the rite of circumcision. This rite, it is true, was not imposed upon the Gentiles by the apostles; still, however, among the Jews its observance was universal. That they observed baptism will not be denied.

Thus is it manifest that the converts from Judaism to Christianity, originally, were both Jews and Christians. They adhered both to Moses and to Christ: they believed both the law and the gospel.

2. My second remark is, that although, according to the commission of Christ, the apostles and others must, in every case, have introduced persons into the Christian church by baptism, yet there are a great many instances recorded in the Acts, in which there is no mention made

of the baptism of persons thus received into Christian communion.

The following are the instances of this kind.

Acts 2: 47. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

4: 4. "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

5: 14. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

6: 7. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

9: 31. "Then had the churches rest, throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

9: 35. "And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, (Eneas,) and turned to the Lord."

9: 42. "And it (Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead) was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord."

11: 21. "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."

11: 24. "And much people was added unto the Lord."

12: 24. "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

13: 12. "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

13: 43. "Now, when the congregation was broken up,

many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."

13: 48. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

14: 1. "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together, into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude, both of Jews and Greeks, believed."

16: 5. "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

17: 4. "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

17: 12. "Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few."

17: 34. "Howbeit, certain men clave unto him and believed; among which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

18: 8. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house."

19: 18. "And many that believed, came and confessed and showed their deeds."

28: 24. "And some believed the things that were spoken."

The following are the cases recorded in the Acts, in which it is definitely stated that persons admitted to the church *were baptized*.

Acts 2: 41. "Then they that gladly received his

word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

8: 12. "But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women."

8: 13. "Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

8: 38. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

9: 18. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized."

10: 48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

16: 15. "And when she (Lydia) was baptized and her household."

16: 33. "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway."

18: 8. "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

19: 5. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

According, therefore, to the Acts of the Apostles, which embraces about thirty years of inspired ecclesiastical history, there are *ten instances* recorded of persons being admitted to the church by baptism; and *twenty-one*, in which no mention is made of their being baptized

III. A third remark I make is, that wherever in the Acts we find parents, *as such*, received into church membership, there it is either plainly intimated, or clearly expressed, that their children were baptized along with them.

The following *four* are the only instances in the Acts, in which persons admitted to the church are distinctly recognized *as parents*: and in each of these cases, it certainly is, at least, as evident, that their children were baptized; as it is, that those admitted in the *twenty-one cases*, above mentioned, were received into the church by baptism.

Acts 10: 1, 2, 48. "There was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and *one that feared God with all his house*, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." "And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Now, although others were baptized besides Cornelius, yet, is it evident, that his *family* were also baptized with himself. If he "*feared God with all his house*," he certainly was baptized *with all his house*.

16: 15. "And when she (Lydia) was baptized, *and her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there; and she constrained us."

16: 31, 33. "And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and *was baptized, he and all his straight-way*."

18: 8. Compared with 1 Cor. 1: 14. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord *with all his house.*" "I thank God that I baptized none of you but *Crispus* and Gaius." If the Apostle *baptized* Crispus, "*who believed on the Lord with all his house,*" it is perfectly manifest that he also baptized his children with him.

Probably, it may not be amiss to associate with these one instance more, closely connected with them.

1 Cor. 1: 16. "And I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas ; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."

I would subjoin as a criticism here, whether the word "*other*" in this passage, does not agree with the word *household* understood. If we consider the verse by itself, it unquestionably does according to the rules of syntax. Or, if we consult their respective genders in the original, they still agree. Nor does the context seem to offer any thing against such construction. It reads thus, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius ; and I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas ; besides, *I know not whether I baptized any other.*" We have already shown, that Paul did baptize the *household* of Crispus ; and if so, it is but reasonable to suppose, that he baptized also *that* of Gaius. And if these things be so, the word *other* does, unquestionably, belong to *household*, understood. Now, if this criticism be at all correct, it is evident that it was the practice of the Apostle, just as regularly to baptize *children* as their parents.

From the foregoing remarks and explanations, the following inferences are inevitable.

First. That instead of Christianity being something entirely distinct from, and opposite to, the Jewish institutions, even the apostles themselves, at least for thirty years, not only received the essential parts of the Jewish system, but also conformed to its transient peculiarities.

The connection between the Old and New Testaments is contemplated by many, at the present day, with very much indifference and vagueness. An attempt to support New Testament doctrines, by Old Testament evidence, is somewhat viewed as a mere begging of the question. Thus, when attempting, in the vindication of Pædobaptism, to maintain the identity of signification between the ordinance of baptism and circumcision, we resort to the Old Testament for proof, it seems to be taken for granted, that nothing but a consciousness of the scarcity of argument, suggests such a course. It would be well for persons of such sentiments as these, to read even the New Testament with more care; for they would certainly find that the connection between the two Testaments, is like that between soul and body, *vital*. The Old Testament Scriptures are the foundation, the writings of the New the superstructure. Now, as the removal of a foundation destroys a building, so the separation of the Old from the New Testament, mars and ruins the revelation of God to man. And, certainly, if he that takes away from the Scriptures but a *small part*, is liable to the divine displeasure, he that takes away *half* of those sacred revelations, cannot be innocent. *Any doctrine that will lead to a conclusion of this kind, cannot be from God.*

Secondly. Since, for the first thirty years of the history of the church, circumcision and baptism were both analo-

gous and contemporaneous institutions in that church, and since it is certain that infants were circumcised throughout the whole Christian church, among the Jews, during that period; so we have the strongest *circumstantial* evidence possible, that infants were also baptized throughout the same time.

I say these institutions were *analogous*. Such the most inconsiderate must allow them to have been. Circumcision, beyond all doubt, bore the same relation to the Jewish church, that baptism sustained to the Christian.

These institutions, at the period to which I allude, were also contemporaneous; that is, *they* were both observed at the same time.

Now, if these Christian Jews, understanding, as they must, baptism as bearing the same relation to the Christian church that circumcision did to the Jewish; if they *circumcised* their children *as Jews*, they certainly also *baptized* them *as Christians*. To suppose any thing contrary to this, is to violate every principle, both of human nature and of reason.

Thirdly. As the omission to mention the baptism of persons admitted into the church, in *twenty-one cases* in the Acts, does not at all destroy the fact that such persons *were baptized*; so the omission to mention the *baptism of infants*, in promiscuous assemblies, does by no means destroy the fact, that *infants were, in reality, baptized* in such instances.

It is astonishing that men, in their extravagant demand for *positive evidence* in support of infant baptism, should forget all the laws of human nature. We venture the assertion, that, according to the nature of the case, the *bap-*

tism of infants could not, with propriety, hold a more conspicuous place than it does in the Acts of the Apostles. Who could possibly be irrational enough to suppose, that in the *twenty-one cases* alluded to above, the persons admitted to the church were not baptized, simply because their baptism is not specified? And who, I would ask, can so forget all the laws of human nature, as to believe, that because, in the reception of a promiscuous multitude to church membership, children are not distinctly mentioned, therefore they were overlooked?

Fourthly. The argument in the inspired history of the church to support infant baptism, is not as *five to many*, but as *five to nothing*; since, of but *five cases* in which parents, or heads of families, are recognized as such, *they all, more or less expressly, imply the baptism of their children.*

Here, I have associated as above, the instance from Corinthians, with those in the Acts, and for the same reason.

It is frequently urged, by those who neglect and oppose this institution, that it is not supported by sufficient *positive evidence*. But who can contemplate the fact before us, and ask still for such evidence? What evidence could be more satisfactory, than that which is exhibited in the inference above?

It is sometimes said in opposition to our sentiments on this subject, that it is not wonderful at all that there should be many families in a large city or country, that had no younger children at all. If this be not wonderful, it certainly *is wonderful* that out of *five instances* recorded in inspired history, in which parents, *as such*, are represent-

ed as being baptized, there should be, *in every case*, to say the least, a *very plain implication* that their children were baptized also, and yet Pædobaptism not be a doctrine of the New Testament !

Fifthly. We also infer from the preceding, that as the term *to believe*, used in reference to any one, according to the testimony of the Acts, *always implied his baptism*, so the phrase, *to be baptized*, employed in reference to a *parent*, *always involved the baptism of his offspring*.

We have seen that there are *twenty-one instances* in the Acts, of admissions to the church, *without* a specification of baptism. Now, how are we to ascertain that the persons admitted on these occasions were baptized ? From two facts.

First. That Christ commissioned his apostles *to baptize* all whom they received into his kingdom.

Secondly. From the fact, that there are *ten instances*, distinctly mentioned, in which it is evident that the apostles did comply with the Saviour's command.

Again. There are several cases of baptisms mentioned in the Acts, in which there is no particular allusion to the baptism of children. How are we to prove that children were baptized, if not in all, yet in nearly all of those instances ? Likewise from two facts. First—because baptism and circumcision being one and the same ordinance, the Saviour's commission to his apostles to baptize, necessarily embraced children. Secondly—because, in *five* particular instances, in which *parents as such* were baptized, there is *positive allusion* to the baptism of their children.

The very same argument, therefore, that proves the baptism of persons admitted to the church, without any

specification of their baptism, also proves the baptism of children in all those cases, in which their admission to this rite is not distinctly mentioned.

Lastly. A final inference from the above is, that of the *ten cases*, in which the ordinance of baptism is distinctly said to have been administered, its administration to children is decidedly prominent.

Of these ten, there were three cases, in which there were no children; those of Simon Magus, the eunuch, and of Paul; of the remaining *seven*, there are *two* distinct instances of their baptism, those of Lydia and the jailer. There is also *one* of fair implication, that of Cornelius; there is also *another*, that peculiarly favors it, the case of the three thousand upon the day of Pentecost. As these persons were baptized according to the direction of Peter, and as that Apostle declared that the promise was to *them and their children*; it is evident, that their *children* were baptized as well as themselves. And, to my own mind, the three thousand spoken of as added to the church, embraced both adults and children. In the same way it is said, Ex. 1: 5, "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls." In this latter case the children were included; and so, I think, in the former. Nor is there a solitary case decidedly opposed to infant baptism. The only one conceivable, is Acts 8: 12, where it is said, "they were baptized both men and women." But this does not imply that children were not baptized; no more than those cases in which it is said that persons *believed* without specifying their baptism, imply that such persons were not baptized.

Now who could expect the baptism of children to be

more prominent in the ministry of the apostles than it is ! There are but two cases of the ten alluded to, in which it is said that *women* were baptized. There are *two* cases equally distinct, of the baptism of *children*, together with several others favoring it very strongly. Now let it be remembered, that *men* would naturally be spoken of first, *women* second, and *children* thirdly ; and who does not see that children hold in baptism, throughout the Acts, the same proportional importance assigned them by nature ?

The testimony of the Acts of the Apostles, then, in favor of Pædobaptism, is clear, consistent and sufficient.

LECTURE XV.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

I. MY first remark on this part of the subject is, that it is evident from the history of the church, either from incidental allusions or direct testimony, that infant baptism was *uniformly practised* to nearly the middle of the twelfth century.

As I can recur to no better authority, and to no one more highly esteemed for the correctness of his theological sentiments, I quote the following proof, from Dwight's Theology; Sermon clviii; subject, Infant Baptism.

“Justin Martyr, born near the close of the first century, observes, when speaking of those who were members of the church, that ‘*a part of these were sixty or seventy years, who were made disciples to Christ from their infancy.*’ But there never was any other mode of making disciples from infancy, except baptism.

“Irenæus, born about the year 97, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, says, ‘*Christ came to save all persons, who by him are born again unto God; infants and little ones, and children and youths, and elder*

persons.' By *being born again*, Irenæus intends, *being baptized*, as he himself elsewhere clearly shows.

"Clemens Alexandrinus, born about the middle of the second century, says, '*If any man be a fisherman, let him think of an apostle, and the children taken out of the water.*' Clemens is here giving direction concerning images to be engraven on seal-rings. These engravings were sometimes indecent, and sometimes idolatrous. Clemens exhorts Christians to adopt such as are becoming and useful; and particularly exhorts fishermen to choose *the image of an apostle baptizing infants*. This furnishes a decisive proof, that in Clemens's view, the apostles baptized infants; and that this practice was, in his own time, the general practice of the Christian church.

"Tertullian, born about the same time with Irenæus, says, '*The delay of baptism is more useful, according to every person's condition and disposition, and even their age; but especially with regard to little children.*' The reason which he urges for this delay is, that their *faith was not entire, or complete*. As Tertullian is here directly opposing the common opinion, it is obvious, that little children were then commonly baptized. The reason why Tertullian proposes this delay was, that he attributed to baptism an importance not given to it by the Scriptures.

"Origen, born about the year 184, and a man of more information than any of his time, says, '*Infants are baptized for the remission of sins.*' And again, '*The church hath received the tradition from the apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants.*'

"Cyprian, who was contemporary with Origen, says, '*That sixty-six bishops, being convened in a council at*

Carthage, having the question referred to them, Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old; decided unanimously, that no infant is to be prohibited from the benefit of baptism, although but just born.'

"Gregory Nazianzen, born in the early part of the fourth century, exhorts parents to offer their children to God in baptism.

"Saint Augustin, born in the middle of the fourth century, says, '*The whole church practises infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but was always in use.*' He also says, that '*he did not remember ever to have read of any person, whether Catholic or heretic, who maintained, that baptism ought to be denied to infants.*' '*This,*' he says, '*the church has always maintained.*'

"Pelagius, a contemporary with Augustin, declares, '*that he had never heard even any impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized.*' Again, he asks, '*Who can be so impious as to hinder the baptism of infants?*' Pelagius is here a witness of high authority. He was born in Britain, and travelled through France, Italy, Africa Proper, and Egypt to Jerusalem. Had such a practice existed in his time, it seems impossible that he should not have heard of it. He was also an inquisitive and learned man; and must, therefore, have been well informed concerning preceding periods. At the same time, the doctrine of infant baptism was objected against his own opinions by St. Augustin, in such a manner, that Pelagius knew not how to answer the objection. Still these are his own assertions.

"A person who employed himself extensively in examining this subject, gives the following result of all his

inquiries. ‘First. During the first four hundred years from the formation of a Christian church, *Tertullian* only urged the delay of infant baptism to infants, and that only in some cases; and Gregory only delayed it, perhaps, to his own children. But neither any society of men, nor any individual, denied the lawfulness of baptizing infants.

“Secondly. In the next seven hundred years, there was not a society, nor an individual, who ever pleaded for this delay; much less any who denied the right or the duty of infant baptism.

“Thirdly. In the year 1120, one sect of the Waldenses declared against the baptism of infants, *because they supposed them incapable of salvation*. But the main body of that people rejected the opinion as heretical; and the sect which held it soon came to nothing.

“Fourthly. The next appearance of this opinion was in the year 1522.

“Had the baptism of infants been ever discontinued by the church; or had it been introduced in any age, subsequent to that of the apostles, these things could not have been; nor could the history of them be found.”

It is thus evident that infant baptism was practised universally among the early members of the Christian church. It is true, that, through the influence of Popery, this ordinance was much corrupted and abused in the dark ages. Its nature was not understood, nor its design properly appreciated. But this was also true in relation to the Supper, and almost all the doctrines of Revelation. But certainly the distinction between the *abuse* of an ordinance and its *invention*, is very wide.

The manner in which this ordinance was first denied,

was through an effort, on the part of certain dissenters from the Romish church, to separate from the truth of the gospel what was spurious and false. Some of these dissenters classed infant baptism among the innovations in religion made by the church at Rome. The Petrobrusians, one of the Waldensian sects, were the first who denied infant baptism. This happened about the middle of the twelfth century. I extract, from Marsh's Ecclesiastical History, the following description of the character of that sect. "They were poor and ignorant, and needed greatly the light of a future age. They gave a literal interpretation to the whole of Christ's sermon on the mount; allowed no wars, nor suits at law, nor increase of wealth; nor oaths, nor self-defence against unjust proceedings." All the other Waldenses, whose general character was the same in other points with this one, held to infant baptism. This one, however, soon disappeared.

II. My second remark on the evidence from church history is, that all the greatest and best men, during the Reformation, held to infant baptism.

Luther and Melancthon, Zuinglius and Calvin, Knox and Cranmer; Beza, Rogers, Ridley, and Latimer; together with a host of others, all advocated infant baptism. This evidence, too, will appear the stronger, when it is remembered, that the world, at that time, was in a state of revolution; that these men were of different nations; of different opinions, many of them, on other subjects; and that they subsequently headed different denominations of Christians. From these very circumstances, they could have had no motive in the reception of this ordinance, but a firm conviction of its divine obligation. They were not,

like us, bound down by party prejudices and interests. They were just about to establish creeds and originate sects. Hence it would have been easy for them to have renounced and banished this institution, had they not perceived its authority and utility. But, instead of this, there is a most beautiful harmony on this point, among all the Reformers. Nor should it be forgotten, that as they could have been under no *special prejudice*, to have perverted the truth in this case ; so, both from their location and attainments, they, unquestionably, were *able* to have discovered the fact, whether Pædobaptism were a Catholic invention or not. The writings of the ancient Fathers were familiar to them all—the history of the Romish church was closely studied—the Word of God was investigated with great care ;—and yet it is the united testimony of all those great and good men, many of whom died in defence of the truth, that infant baptism is an ordinance of the gospel ; and that it has been in the Christian church from its origin. Now it is not a little surprising, that persons living in a much later age, and under circumstances by no means as favorable for candor, and with by no means the learning of these great men, should attempt, upon the evidence of church history, to establish a different sentiment !

Those, at the time of the Reformation, that denied infant baptism, were not only greatly ignorant, but extremely fanatical. The following is a description of their character, as given by Marsh. “ Their chief tenets were, that the office of magistracy is unnecessary ; that all distinctions among men is contrary to the gospel ; that property should be held in common ; and that a plurality of wives

is commendable. And in reference to baptism, they declared, that it was only to be administered to persons in adult years, and to be performed by immersion." These sectaries were called Anabaptists, from their practice of re-baptizing, in adult years, persons who had been baptized in infancy. Afterwards they rejected this appellation, and arrogantly assumed that of *Baptists*; taking it for granted, that none were baptized, but those of their own party.

That a set of men of the above description are not qualified for the work of reformation, is perfectly plain. The reformation of old abuses in religion requires *talents*, *information*, *consistent piety*, and *great prudence*; none of which the Anabaptists of Germany seemed to possess. That they should, therefore, have run into great excesses, and should have renounced as much truth as error, was but natural.

The peculiar sentiments of this fanatical sect, as it regards baptism, passed from Holland into England, where they were embraced by certain Independents of the church of Mr. Brown. From the description of this latter sect, at that time, they must have been well prepared to have received the doctrines of the Anabaptists. Each was characterized by great bigotry and latitudinarianism of sentiment. From England the Baptists came over into America, in both which countries they have risen to great respectability for numbers, talents, and piety. They now rank on a level with other denominations of Christians: and though they have renounced all the grosser faults of the Anabaptists of Germany, still they hold with great tenacity to their sentiments in reference to baptism.

III. A third remark I offer is, that all, or nearly all, Christian denominations, however they may have differed among themselves on other points, and in whatever country they may have lived, save the Baptists alone, have been agreed as to the validity of infant baptism.

Now it is utterly inconceivable to my mind, that so many different sects, and many of them the most enlightened and pious on earth, could all be harmonious on this point, did not the ordinance of Pædobaptism rest on a solid foundation. Does it look more likely that all these denominations are wrong, and that the Baptists alone are right? Or does it seem more rational, that they are right, and the seceding one is wrong? It is true, truth is not confined to a multitude. Still, however, where a sentiment has long been entertained by the majority of Christian churches, and has been advocated by a very large number of the most devoted champions of the cross, it must and does acquire great weight. Now this is the case with Pædobaptism. Its way has been one of dignity and glory. The worthiest names on the records of the church, have been its warmest advocates. It has always been prominent, always appreciated. Certainly we could *scarcely* expect this to have been the case, unless its origin be higher than that of human authority.

The testimony from church history, then, in favor of this ordinance, is both *clear* and *certain*. Scarcely any doctrine of Revelation has more evidence from this source.

I shall conclude this Lecture by attempting to show, *that the DENIAL of this institution, during the period of church history, is much more probable, from the nature of the case, than its INVENTION.*

My first reason for this is, because there is in the New Testament no *specification*, at which children should be baptized. It is true, as appears from the question proposed to the council at Carthage, that the analogy of circumcision had generally been observed among the early Christians, and that accordingly infants were, at least in many cases, baptized at eight days. Still, however, this was a practice which could not be always observed. We find, also, that that body of divines decided against it. In consequence of the inexplicitness, therefore, of the Scriptures on this point, as there would be found a few who would baptize *under* eight days, so there would be found a *multitude* who would transcend that limit. Nor would there be any precise boundary, beyond which they might not go, and yet receive this ordinance. In consequence of this, the baptism of children would, in many cases, be so delayed as even to originate the doubt whether they might, with propriety, be baptized at all, as infants: and this we find actually to have been the case, in some instances, as recorded in sacred history.

2. A second reason for this is, the fact that at a very early period in the church, baptism, which was the sign, was taken for regeneration itself. Sins, committed after the administration of this rite, were consequently regarded as almost unpardonable. The result of this sentiment would naturally be the postponement of this ordinance, in many cases, until within a few hours of death. This seems to have been the error of Tertullian; probably was also that of Constantine the Great, and of the father of Gregory.

3. Another cause which would contribute towards, first, the neglect, and afterwards the denial of this institution,

was that, through ill health or the distance from a regular minister, it would, in many cases, be inconvenient to have this rite attended to within a proper time. Cases of this sort must frequently have occurred; and what was, at first, the result of necessity, would finally be that of choice. And thus the denial of the institution itself, would eventually be the consequence of such a course of conduct. Scenes of this kind frequently occur in the present day. The parent, probably, has really not had a convenient opportunity for baptizing his children for a long time. He thus contracts a habit of neglecting this ordinance, until ultimately he begins seriously to doubt whether baptism be of any benefit at all to children, and whether the scriptural warrant for its administration be not obscure and uncertain! Thus, by venturing to the edge of the precipice, have many fallen to rise no more to the light of truth on this subject.

4. Another cause of this would be, an unwillingness to assume the obligations of Pædobaptism. Men in all ages have been reluctant to undertake high responsibilities, especially where there is no carnal allurements to entice them to such a course. How difficult is it among us, at the present time, to induce many persons, who seem to have every required qualification for the church but a willing mind, to assume the profession of Christianity? How difficult to persuade ordinary church members, to fill spheres, in which both their obligations and their usefulness would be promoted? Men are loth to assume burdens, while it is uncertain in their own minds that they are able to bear them. Now all these considerations appertain, in a peculiar degree, to the subject of infant bap-

tism. The obligations which this ordinance imposes are high—its duties arduous and protracted. This being the case, many would be disposed, first, to ponder the matter, afterwards to neglect, and finally, to deny the ordinance altogether, as of divine authority. It has always been found easy for men to disprove, at least at the tribunals of their own consciences, that which they did not wish to be true.

5. Another reason for the denial of infant baptism was, the awful perversion and abuse of this ordinance in the Catholic church. Many weak and ignorant, though pious Christians, discovering that this rite was regarded as essential to salvation; or that many baptized in infancy grew up to be exceedingly corrupt; or that the church itself had been filled with the wicked through this means; would, of course, be disposed to deny the *divine warrant* for an institution, which appeared so hurtful. Especially, was this conclusion easy and natural, when this ordinance itself was closely associated with many inventions evidently of but human origin, and decidedly subversive of all piety. Now this was precisely the state of things in the Romish church, when the Petrobrusians first, and the Anabaptists of Germany secondly, denied the divine authority of this ordinance. Disgusted in their hearts, at the abuses connected with the church, and unable properly to distinguish and remove the cause of these evils, they *honestly*, probably, but *ignorantly* and *unwisely*, struck a death blow at one of the essential parts of the Christian church. They improperly supposed that it was *infant membership* that produced all these abominations. They, therefore, attempted, by its destruction, to put down the evils which

they erroneously supposed grew out of it. The very same cause is also powerfully operating at the present day to the injury of this institution. Not perceiving any special benefit, which baptism has rendered many households, numbers are disposed to reject it as a mere human invention. Such persons, however, should remember that *this is the very ground that infidelity has occupied for ages*. The infidel can see no more advantage in the *Christian profession* of the Baptist, than the latter can discover in the baptism of the children of Pædobaptists.

6. Another cause of this, may be found in the disposition of the unlearned, to take the Scriptures literally. Probably such a liability is to be found among all the plain readers of the Word of God. Their very circumstances would, in a great measure, subject them to this error. When, too, they perceived that the learned doctors of the church had only corrupted religion, and that they were employing all their subtleties of argument to vindicate and uphold these corruptions; the common people would naturally discard learning, and hold to an exactly literal exposition of the Word of God. Whatever doctrines, therefore, were taught in the Scriptures, but incidentally, or by implication, would, of course, be denied; and many things would be assumed as true, which formed no part of the Word of God properly understood.

7. Another cause which would lead to this result, would be, the application of a rule to *children*, which is only true of *adults*; viz. that *faith must precede baptism*. This error would be easy; and the abuses of religion every where prevalent in the Christian church, would render it almost inevitable.

8. Another argument to show that the *denial*, and not the *invention* of this rite, has taken place during the period of sacred history, is, that it unquestionably existed as early as the fourth century. Now, it is certain that there was no Popery at this time; nor was the church, by any means, entirely corrupt. Much of life and activity she then possessed. Especially was she vigilant of the doctrines and institutions of religion. From the very character of the church in the third and fourth century, it is impossible that infant baptism could have been introduced at that early period, as an innovation in the church. If, then, it existed in these periods, and yet could not possibly have been first introduced then, it must have existed earlier; that is, it must have come down from the apostles. Nor is it any objection to this, to assert, that the church in the fourth century was corrupt enough to have introduced infant baptism; since there is evidence, that about that time she administered the communion to children. This may be true, without implying the least corruption in the church. It is quite likely, that the Supper was administered to baptized infants, in the days of the apostles and ancient Christian Fathers, at a very early age. Nor is it very certain, that this practice was abandoned until a later period, when creeds were formed, and churches were more regularly constituted. Instead, therefore, of the admission of children, who had been baptized when infants, to the Supper, being an invention of a corrupt church, in the fourth century; it was but the relic, probably, of apostolical usage. Subsequently, this matter was properly enough changed, or, rather, *but better regu-*

lated. Our sentiments on this subject have already been expressed.

9. Lastly. Infant baptism could not possibly have been an innovation in the church, since there is no record of any such innovation at all. It certainly existed at an early period. It was in the church before the rise of the Papal See. It is not, then, a Romish invention; nor is it the superstitious invention of a former period. The attaching of too high value to this ordinance, caused Tertullian to advise its *delay*, not its administration to *all persons indiscriminately*. See, too, what an excitement the heresies of the Docetæ and Ebeonites, of Arius and Pelagius, and the schism of the Donatists, as well as the controversy about the time of Easter, produced in those early centuries. They assembled councils, excited disputes, caused separations, and agitated the whole church. Can any one, then, in his senses, suppose that so important an innovation as that of Pædobaptism, would have been passed over in silence? *Impossible, utterly impossible!* As this ordinance, then, is not a Popish invention, nor an innovation in the early Christian church, *it did come down from the time of the apostles*. And as its *denial*, for the above reasons, would be highly probable, *it is its denial that has been introduced*. And, as this denial would be more likely to take place among the *pious poor*, than among any others, there can be no doubt but that it originated, according to the testimony of historians, among, first, the Petrobrusians, and afterwards, the Anabaptists of Germany.

LECTURE XVI.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

I. My first remark here is, that objections invalidate no doctrine or theory, if well established by evidence.

There are many persons, who so misconceive of all the principles of just reasoning, as to suppose that the raising of an objection against a doctrine, is at once its overthrow. According to this rule, nothing could be sufficiently proven to warrant belief: for there is scarcely a truth in the moral or physical world, which may not give rise to many objections. Atheists seem to suppose, that there are many difficulties in the way of exercising faith in the existence of a God. Infidels see hosts of doubts upon the face of Revelation. And all the heretics that have ever lived, have started very many objections to the peculiar doctrines to which they have been severally opposed. Multitudes of common people, too, are much startled at the demonstrated principles of Philosophy. But are we to renounce any of these fundamental truths, either of nature or revelation, because ingenious, wicked, or ignorant men, raise objections against them? Unquestionably not. We are to spread before the mind of the sceptic the evidence by

which our principles are supported ; and then, if he refuse his belief, the consequences are *his*, not ours.

So in reference to the subject under debate—*we are not to renounce any thing that has been fairly proven, simply because there are objections in our minds against it.* Nor are we to do this, even if these objections are unanswerable by ourselves. How many genuine believers in revelation are unable to compete with the sophistries of their more wily opponents ? How many are there, whose only hope of salvation rests upon Christ ; who, yet, are incapable of answering the objections to his divinity, as urged by Unitarians ? But are the members of our churches to renounce, through the mere cavils of infidels, that creed which they have ever regarded as essential to the very existence of genuine religion ? In this way, we should sacrifice every doctrine and duty of the Christian system. What if there occur to the believing parent, doubts as to many points connected with the baptism of his children, and what, too, if these doubts are vigorously upheld by advisers, who oppose this doctrine ; is he to surrender an ordinance of God well established by proof, to the superficial objections of himself, or of others ? Most certainly not. And, yet, nothing is more common now-a-days, than for a mere *surmise*, to invalidate in the minds of some the strongest evidences in support of this institution. Surely, men have not only forgotten both duty and revelation, but reason too.

II. A second remark I offer is, that the objections, which many raise against this ordinance, are refuted by the very circumstances under which they are made.

I. Many raise objections against it in the first place,

who have no perception at all of the *spiritual nature of the connection* between parent and child. This is generally the case with an unbelieving world. They see no advantage in this institution—and well they do not; since they have no just conception of the spiritual duties they owe to their children. Whenever, therefore, an objection against infant baptism proceeds from this source, it carries its refutation on its very face. A blind man can see no need of light; a deaf man no need of sounds.

2. Others, again, object to this ordinance, who are perfectly ignorant of its nature and design. They have heard of its being administered; or they have seen a few instances of its administration; or, if familiar with its external part, they have never reflected upon its spiritual signification and benefits. Such persons as these, too, often raise objections against this ordinance. But what are their objections worth? Precisely nothing; as they are founded in a total misunderstanding of the ordinance itself.

3. Others, again, raise objections against this rite, who are completely under the dominion of the most inveterate prejudices against it. They have always been under teachings that have misrepresented, or ridiculed it. They have heard it called a “human invention”—a “relic of Popery”—the “prostitution of a gospel ordinance.” The institution has been caricatured before them. They were disgusted with it from childhood: and it is matter of astonishment with them, how any of God’s people can be so deluded as to advocate such a rite. These, too, raise powerful objections against Pædobaptism. But of what force are their objections? None at all; since they result *exclusively* from deep-rooted prejudice. It is impossible for

such persons to pass a candid judgment on the subject. Their minds are already pre-occupied.

4. Many object to this ordinance, also, who maintain no family government at all. Their children are raised up to have their own way. They are ungovernable and wicked. They could not possibly be brought under the influence of a *regular Christian training*. They are more self-important than their parents. But of what avail are objections from this source? How could that parent, who has never yet learned to regulate the concerns of his own family with discretion, who has never had his children in subjection, how could he *promise, before God, to discipline and govern them* as the gospel requires? How could he, who is himself under the control of his own offspring, take a vow to train that offspring in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord?” It is but to be expected, that such parents should not appreciate the blessings of an ordinance, which makes them the *religious and accountable heads* of their families.

5. Many, too, raise objections against this ordinance, who maintain no family prayer, and who have no just sense whatever of family piety. Though, when making a personal profession of religion, they solemnly promised to observe all the duties of the gospel in the church, the family, and the closet; yet, are they living habitually *without a family altar!* The Scriptures are not read, no social prayer is made, nor are the songs of Zion sung around the domestic fireside. Servants are never instructed, nor are children catechised. The Sabbath is often violated, and the sanctuary neglected! *And such persons raise objections to infant baptism.* No wonder, since the baptism of

their children would be not only a nullity, but *perjury* itself! How profane must it be regarded by God, for a parent solemnly to promise, in the reception of baptism for his child, *to pray with that child*, when he retires the same evening to rest, without bowing around the family altar! Such objections can have no weight whatever. Baptism, probably, would be justly enough refused to such parents.

6. There are others, again, who raise objections against this ordinance, who have treacherously and profanely abused it. They have had many of their children baptized: but they have raised them as if they were heathen—they have not instructed them with care—they have not governed them with discretion—they have permitted them to violate the Sabbath, to neglect the house of God, and the reading of the Scriptures. And because their children have grown up in impiety, *though baptized when young*, they have begun seriously to doubt the advantage, and consequently the divine obligation, of infant baptism! Such persons had much better wonder why God has not smitten them with his frown. They had much better doubt their own personal religion. And, surely, it is but a poor remedy, in such a case, to add to the sin of profaning an ordinance of God, that of its denial! The objections of this class of persons, too, can have no weight whatever.

III. I now pass on to consider a few of the more prominent objections to this ordinance.

1. The first that we shall consider is, its inutility. It is alleged, that the administration of this ordinance to infants cannot, in the nature of the case, do them any good. Now, if by this objection it is intended only to state, that the infants baptized are not *acting parties* in

the administration of baptism, we, of course, will admit it. The transaction takes place between the minister, on the one hand, acting for God, and the parent, on the other, acting for the child. Or if this objection means, that the mere ceremony of applying water to a child in a congregation, can render the child no service, we also consent. It is evident, that mere water applied to the body, under any circumstances, and in any quantity, can never cleanse the pollution of the heart. But if this objection means, that God cannot bestow upon a child, through the ordinance of baptism, that grace which, but for the administration of such ordinance, he might be pleased to withhold,—if this be the meaning, we entirely dissent. That God can bless any of his creatures, none will deny. That infants are capable of receiving his blessing, none will deny. Christ did bless infants while here on earth; and John the Baptist was sanctified from the womb. Now, if there is no insurmountable barrier between God's grace and an infant, it is almost blasphemy to suppose, that God may not bestow that blessing upon an infant, when admitted to the seal of his covenant, which he might not bestow, should such infant be withheld from such seal. Or, in other words, to suppose that God may not make the ordinance of baptism a blessing to an infant, when he himself has appointed such ordinance for their benefit, is nothing else than to impeach the wisdom and integrity of God. And surely, if God, after permitting children to be presented to him in baptism, should withhold his blessing from them, then we might cease to put confidence in any of his ordinances and promises. What evidence have we that the celebration of the Supper will be of any benefit to us,

but the promise of Christ? And we have the same promise that baptism shall be blest to our children. Or, if this objection mean, that the parent, in the administration of baptism to his child, may not be made instrumental *thereby* to the salvation of his offspring; from this, too, we entirely dissent. That God may bestow that blessing upon the child of a believing parent, while in the exercise of faith he dedicates such child to his service, which he might withhold from the offspring of him who places no faith in his covenant, is so manifest, that none but an infidel can doubt it. To doubt it, is to suppose that the Deist and the believer sustain the same relation to God. It is to suppose, that the exercise of faith in God is of no service whatever. Besides, in the baptism of his child, the parent is brought to recognize the duties he owes him, and gives a solemn promise to discharge those duties with fidelity. Now, to suppose that a parent, who has given no such pledge, will be as faithful as one who has, is to suppose that promises and oaths have no binding force upon the consciences of men. It is but to suppose, that persons out of the church, and refusing to take the church covenant upon them, will be as faithful as those who are regular members of the Christian community. The supposition is contrary to the very nature of things; and on this subject we are not unwilling to put the matter to the test of experience. Those parents who best understand the nature, design, and duties, of Pædobaptism, invariably have the best disciplined and the most pious children. I do not mean by this, that there may not be some families among those who deny this ordinance, equally pious with some among those who maintain it; but that, as a general thing,

the children of the advocates of this institution are more moral, orderly, and pious, than the children of those who have renounced it. The facts on this subject are so full and complete, as to admit no doubt whatever. It has been observed, not only by the pious, but by the wicked themselves.

The objection, therefore, against the ordinance of infant baptism, which is founded on its inutility, besides the arrogant dictation with which it is tinctured, is perfectly futile and vain.

2. The incapability of faith on the part of the child, is also urged, as an objection to this ordinance. It is asserted, that faith is necessary to the right administration of baptism; and that, since a child cannot be supposed to have faith, it can, with no sort of propriety, be baptized. Now, to the proposition that faith is necessary to the proper administration of this ordinance, I readily assent: *but then it is faith in the contracting parties.* These are, as we have already mentioned, the minister on the part of God, and the parent on the part of the child. Now, it is evident, that faith both in the pastor who administers, and the parent who receives, for his child, this ordinance, is of essential importance. But beyond this, there is no *essential* need of faith in the ordinance of baptism. These are the parties contracting. The child, for the time being, is not known in the affair, but as the passive subject of divine goodness. Still, however, so soon as the child can understand, he is to be informed of this act, and should be required to exercise faith in it. But, if it be still said, *that professed faith in the subject baptized* is essential to the administration of this ordinance, I would reply, that this is

true in relation to adults ; but in reference to infants, *it is not true*, since they cannot exercise faith. And, if this matter be still insisted on, we would say, that faith in infants is no more necessary to baptism, than to salvation ; and if they can be saved without the exercise of faith, they unquestionably can be baptized without it. Again, faith is no more necessary to the right administration of baptism, than it was to the right administration of circumcision. *Without faith*, Abraham would have been no fit subject for circumcision ; but *without faith in himself*, Isaac was circumcised. And thus, *without faith*, Lydia could not have been baptized ; yet, *without faith in themselves*, her children were. Faith is required in the parties acting, not in the infant for whom they are acting.

3. Another objection to the administration of baptism to children is, that it is a profanation of a gospel ordinance ; since there is as much probability that such children when grown will be wicked, as that they will be pious. To this objection I would first reply, that the premises are not true. I deny the fact, that there is as much probability that children baptized when young, and raised according to the obligations of such baptism, are as liable, subsequently, to be wicked as pious—and *I deny it upon the veracity of God*. God has promised to bestow his grace upon *every child* properly dedicated and raised. To suppose, therefore, that there is as much probability, that a child properly baptized and raised will become impious as holy, is but to make God a liar ! We may just as much rely, therefore, upon the future conversion and obedience of a child properly baptized and raised, as we may upon the salvation of an adult who makes a credible profession

of religion. The salvation of each rests upon the *sovereign promise* of God, which is as much extended to the child as to the adult. And even with any becoming fidelity on the part of parents baptizing their children, we may safely calculate, that the majority of cases will turn out well. Such is found positively to be the fact in those places where this ordinance is understood with any good degree of accuracy. Now more than this cannot well be expected of a number of adults joining the church, as they often do, under the excitements of a revival. *That revival which turns out a majority of true conversions, among those who profess a change of heart, must be very genuine.* In this remark, I am upheld by very many facts; and some of them both recent and painful.

The probability, then, in the baptism of a child, as to his future salvation, is at least as great as in the case of an adult. And any one who thinks to the contrary, we hesitate not to say, is fit neither to administer nor receive the ordinance of Pædobaptism. But to this I would reply, in the second place, that if, for the fear of profaning a gospel ordinance, we should refuse to administer baptism to any, who may, by their subsequent conduct, cast off its obligations, then could we administer it in *no case* whatever. No man who administers this rite, has the positive assurance, that the subject to whom he applies it, will always observe its duties. How often those baptized when adult fall again into the world, and renounce their baptismal obligations altogether? In all such cases the baptism of such persons is, of course, prostituted; but then the weight of condemnation falls in this case, as in that of baptized infants, who when adult become profligate, *upon*

him who who has thrown off the obligations of his baptism. This objection also proves entirely too much. It would prevent the preaching of the gospel to sinners, *lest it be abused!* It would prohibit the reading of the Scriptures, *lest their instructions be not heeded.* In fact, if extended, it would have prevented the death of Christ and those offers of mercy to sinners, which were predicated thereon. The Redeemer foresaw that sinners would reject his grace—that they would profane his mercy. But did this prevent his interposing benevolence? If, then, the prostitutions of divine goodness by those to whom it is offered, interfere not with that grand scheme of mercy, by which pardon is offered, on the part of God, to the guilty, certainly the probability, that a proper subject of a gospel ordinance should abuse such ordinance in his after life, is no reason why it should not be administered. This objection, therefore, when properly canvassed, is of no weight whatever. It proves too much, and thus proves nothing.

4. Another objection urged by many is, that the baptism of an infant denies him the right of judgment as to this ordinance. It forestalls, say they, his opinions, and renders him the blind dupe of the sentiments of ancestors. It is in this way, too, they allege, that error has been always propagated in the world.

In this case, the parent who renders such an excuse for the neglect of the baptism of his child, either believes in the obligation of Pædobaptism, or he does not. If he does not, then is he really unfit to baptize his child, and disqualified to be a member of a Pædobaptist church. His objection, in this case, must evidently arise from *his own* views of this ordinance. But if, as is implied in the

objection itself, the parent believe in the obligation of this rite, then his apology for its omission is altogether absurd. He believes that God commands him to baptize his child ; and yet that the performance of this duty would be injurious to the spiritual interests of such child ! Safety, according to this position, lies not in obeying, but in disobeying divine precepts ! Again ; if this objection be valid in reference to this institution, it is also valid in every other case. Suppose a father, who is himself a pious man, to be situated in the midst of infidels, reasoning according to this sentiment, such father would be ready to say, “ Since the consciences of men should ever be kept free and unbiassed ; and since the inculcating of respect for the Word of God must have a tendency to establish a belief in the authority of Revelation ; therefore, I will never inculcate such respect for the divine oracles ; nor will I attempt in any way to give a preponderance to the judgment of my child, in favor of that system of religion which I myself regard to be true.” Now what would be the issue in such a case ? The depravity of the child’s heart naturally leads him to discard the obligations of Christianity ; his associates infuse perpetually into his mind deistical sentiments ; and his pious father, (if such a thing be conceivable,) through a most tender regard for the integrity of his child’s conscience, never once teaches him that the Word of God is the only foundation of a sinner’s hope ! How *necessarily*, under such circumstances, would a child become an infidel. The result would be inevitable ; and it would require but very little wisdom to foresee it. Apply the case. Here is a father who regards Pædobaptism as a divine ordinance. But lest he should harm the conscience

of his offspring, and occupy beforehand what ought to be filled, but by the judgment of his child when grown; he neglects the administration of such ordinance altogether. The disposition of his child leads him to condemn the obligations of religion in every form. Many with whom he mingles denies the validity of this ordinance, and even ridicule it in his presence; and his pious father, instead of advocating and maintaining the institution, has really denied it by his own practice! What will be the result? Why, certainly, that that child who might, through different training, have grown up under the hallowing influence of this ordinance, now contemns it, and probably along with it discards religious obligations of every kind? The result is necessary. How is it possible for a child to respect a gospel ordinance, when his own parent has taught him to despise it? Such parents as adopt the above sentiment, therefore, instead of rendering their own account more acceptable, and the consciences of their children more free, do positively, by *a breach of trust*, plunge themselves into greater guilt; while they fasten upon their children the strongest and most pernicious of fetters. The truth is, the minds of our children present fields for us to cultivate; and if we refuse such culture, an enemy will inevitably undertake it.

There are some parents who subjoin to the above, that it is a wish to keep their children in the Presbyterian community, which makes them neglect their baptism. They allege, that if, when grown, their children should not be satisfied with their infant baptism, they would be under the necessity of joining the Baptist church; as no

Pædobaptist would baptize them a second time. To this I would reply, first—that if such parents would discharge their duty faithfully, there would be but little danger of a change of sentiment among their children. But to this I would reply, secondly, that if their children be not Pædobaptist when grown, they ought not to be received into a Pædobaptist church; so that they would be under the necessity, even in this case, to seek membership elsewhere.

5. Another objection urged by some is, that since children are introduced into the church by their baptism, and yet are not excluded when guilty even of the grossest crimes; the present manner of observing this institution, at least, cannot be maintained without the greatest inconsistency.

To this objection we will readily concede two points, viz. the failure on the part of the church, at least, in many places, to extend her control over her baptized children; and also over parents, as to the particular act by which they surrendered their offspring to God. The church is solemnly bound to see that parents do not grossly neglect their duty to their baptized seed; and she is also bound to reprove and advise those who have been admitted to her ordinance of Pædobaptism. A failure, however, in these particulars, is an *abuse* of this ordinance; it is not an *objection* to the institution itself.

But, in reference to the substance of this objection, I would observe; that the exclusion of persons from the church implies that they were previously members. Now we have already shown, that children *are not*, in consequence of their baptism, members of the church in the

ordinary acceptation of that phraseology. If, then, they be not members of the church, in full and regular standing, their exclusion would be absurd.

We might proceed to specify many other objections, but we deem it unnecessary. All of them originate in some misconception or other of the ordinance itself. And as the foregoing pages have been devoted almost entirely to the elucidation of this ordinance, their careful perusal will, we are persuaded, by the blessing of God, remove from the minds of the candid and pious those scruples of conscience by which they have been perplexed. That such may be the result, is the most prayerful and sincere desire of the writer.

· THE END.





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